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The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne

Edited by
A A Luce and T E Jessop

Volume Two

The Principles of Human Knowledge
First Draft of the Introduction to the Principles
Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous
Philosophical Correspondence with Johnson

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Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd
London Edinburgh Paris Melbourne Toronto and New York

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3 Henrietta Street London WC2
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385 Madison Avenue New York 17

SOCIÉTÉ FRANÇAISE D'ÉDITIONS NELSON
25 rue Henri Barbusse Paris V^e

First published 1949

EDITOR'S PREFACE

THIS volume contains Berkeley's two chief philosophical works. Judged by the criteria of originality of thought and quality of expression, both of them are masterpieces, and therefore entitled to the tribute of a scrupulously edited text. In each case the text of Berkeley's own last edition has been reproduced, and all variants (except those of spelling and punctuation) in the earlier edition or editions have been noted at the foot of the page. In the *apparatus criticus* the following abbreviations have been used :

Principles of Human Knowledge

A = 1710 ed.
B = 1734 ed.
MS. = MS. of Sects. 85-145

Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous

A = 1713 ed.
B = 1725 ed.
C = 1734 ed.

All footnotes to the texts not enclosed in square brackets are Berkeley's. The editorial notes are as few, and the expository Introductions as short, as I can make them, for hitherto Berkeley has been read far too little, and his expositors far too much.

Of the two other pieces in this volume, the first draft of the Introduction to the *Principles* will probably be examined only by specialized students, but the correspondence with Johnson, all too brief, should interest every reader of the major works.

T. E. J.

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A Treatise concerning The Principles of Human Knowledge

Wherein the chief causes of error and
difficulty in the Sciences, with the
grounds of Scepticism, Atheism, and
Irreligion, are inquired into

First printed in 1710

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

THE *Principles* was first published in May 1710, in Dublin, when Berkeley was but twenty-five years old. He republished it only once, in 1734 in London, slightly revised (the volume included the third edition of the *Three Dialogues*). In the following pages I give the text of the second edition, modernizing only spelling and the use of capital letters, with all variants in the first edition at the foot, along with the variants in a surviving MS. of the part extending from Section 85 to the opening sentence of Section 145 (British Museum Add. MS. 39304, pages 35-105). The italics and punctuation are Berkeley's.

A draft in Berkeley's hand of the Introduction differs sufficiently from the final form to warrant its being reproduced separately at the end (pages 121-45). Being dated November and December 1708, it saves us from having merely to guess when the *Principles* was being written. That the subject-matter was being thought out earlier is evident from the *Philosophical Commentaries* (called by Fraser *The Commonplace Book*), which Professor Luce dates 1707-8, and which, as edited by him, enables us to follow the shaping and reshaping of Berkeley's philosophy. It almost opens with a reference to 'the immaterial hypothesis' (entry 19, Luce's numbering). These two sources confirm Berkeley's statement in a letter of September 6, 1710, to his friend Sir John Percival: 'The opinion of matter I have entertained some years.' The working out of the *Principles* was interrupted by a problem in the psychology of vision—the perception of distance or externality—for the full handling of which he turned aside to compose his *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* (see *Princ.*, Sect. 43).

Berkeley told Percival, in a letter of February 23, 1713, that it was the *Principles* that brought him the acquaintance of Steele, for whose *Guardian* he wrote several essays in that year; but at first the book attracted little attention in Dublin and England, and apparently none at all on the Continent. 'Tractatus iste,' he wrote to Jean Leclerc, 'vix cuiquam extra hanc insulam, quantum intelligo, hactenus innotuit' (undated draft of a letter,

Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 39304, pages 76f). His hope that it would be reviewed in Leclerc's *Bibliothèque Choisie* (Amsterdam) was disappointed, though a review of the *Essay* appeared there in 1711. Through Percival he tried to elicit the opinions of leaders of thought in England. Percival's first report, in August 1710, was that he could induce none of his friends to read the book, the mere mention of its theme—the denial of matter—sufficing to put them off, and provoking them to dismiss the doctrine as a mere extravaganza,¹ though one friend did charitably add that 'Erasmus was not the worse thought of for writing in praise of folly.' In his reply Berkley claimed a few converts in Dublin. Percival's next report, in October, stated that Samuel Clarke, London's arbiter of philosophical soundness, and William Whiston, Newton's successor at Cambridge, found the book able, but wrong in its principles.² In December all he could add was that Lord Pembroke, to whom the book had been dedicated, found it ingenious but unconvincing.

Berkeley's philosophy did not become a subject of written attention and controversy until he published *Alciphron* (1732). For some time thereafter he was known as 'the author of *Alciphron*', and it was while this reputation was still fresh that he took the opportunity in 1734 of reprinting the neglected *Principles* and *Three Dialogues*. There was no further edition until 1776, when these two works were again issued together as 'being out of print, and both being much enquired for.' That the demand continued is shown by the appearance of editions of the Collected Works in 1784, 1820, 1837, and 1843, besides separate editions of the *Principles* in 1820 (London) and 1852 (Allahabad). Reprints multiplied after Fraser's edition of the Works (1871). Translations of the *Principles* came late: the first,

¹ Leibniz's view was much the same: 'Qui in Hybernia corporum realitatem impugnat, videtur nec rationes afferre idoneas, nec mentem suam satis explicare. Suspicor esse ex eo hominum genere qui per paradoxa cognosci volunt' (letter to Des Bosses, 15th March 1715; *Opera*, ed. Erdmann, 1840, p. 726a).

² The correspondence is in B. Rand, *Berkeley and Percival* (1914). Percival's report is partly borne out by Whiston himself in his *Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Samuel Clarke* (1730), pp. 133f: Berkley 'was pleased to send to Mr. Clarke and myself each of us a book. After we had both perused it I went to Dr. Clarke and discoursed with him about it to this effect, that I, being not a metaphysician, was not able to answer Mr. Berkeley's subtle premises, though I did not at all believe his absurd conclusion. I therefore desired that he, who was deep in such subtleties, but did not appear to believe

into German, was made by the distinguished Ueberweg in 1869, though the Introduction had been included in an Italian version of the *Essay on Vision* in 1732 (Venice). There have since been versions in Dutch, French, Italian, Polish, Russian, and Spanish.

THE PLACE OF THE 'PRINCIPLES' IN BERKELEY'S SYSTEM

The *Principles* (and the *Three Dialogues*, which is a semi-popular re-expression of its doctrine) is a fragment, though complete in certain respects. It describes itself as Part I. The designation is omitted from the title page only of the second edition, being retained at the beginning of the text and at the head of each page, presumably as a confession and reminder of the incompleteness of the work, for by that time he had given up hope of carrying out his original project. The Introduction, by the way, is to the entire scheme. Of this scheme there are many pieces of evidence.

(1) A 'Second Part' is promised in the Preface to the *Three Dialogues* (1713; also in the second edition of this, 1725), and in the draft letter to Leclerc mentioned above. There are references to a 'Second Book' in the *Philosophical Commentaries* (entries 508, 807, 878), and very many other entries are marked with a marginal sign that indicates material for that Book. The last sentence of Section 144 of the *Principles*, first edition only, also seems to point to it. This Part was to deal with what Berkeley called Moral Philosophy, taken to include Metaphysics. It was to treat of the distinction between the corporeal and the mental, the nature of God, the freedom of man, the commonplaces of ethics, and apparently a nominalist logic of demonstration, arising out of the claim that 'Morality may be demonstrated as mixed Mathematics' (entry 755). Why this part was never published is explained by Berkeley in a letter of November 1729 to Johnson (below, page 282): 'As to the Second Part of my Treatise . . . the fact is that I had made considerable progress in it; but the MS. was lost about fourteen years ago, during my travels in Italy, and I never had the leisure since to do so disagreeable a thing as writing twice on the same subject.'

(2) A '3d Book' is mentioned in entry 583 of the *Commentaries*. Because of the subject-matter there, we may assume that 'our Principles of Natural Philosophy' in entry 853 is a reference to that Book. Other entries have the marginal sign for the same field of inquiry. In the *Principles*, an allusion in

Section 131, and the last sentence of Section 132 (first edition only) may also be read as foreshadowing Part III. Some of the material of this Part has been saved to us in the essay *De Motu* (1721).

(3) That there was to be yet another Part, dealing with Mathematics, is suggested by entries 853 and 676 of the *Commentaries*, by other entries marginally marked with a sign for that subject, and by allusions in Sections 125 (first edition only) and 122 (MS. only) of the *Principles*. We may take *The Analyst* (1734) as incompletely representing this fourth Part (Sect. 50 refers back to 'some hints' of the subject in the *Principles*). That published work was pithily anticipated some twenty-six years earlier in entry 333 of the *Commentaries*: 'Newton's fluxions needless.' Other entries contain judgments on mathematicians so biting that their author would not have allowed them to slip into print. 'I see no wit in any of them,' he says (entry 372), 'but Newton. The rest are mere triflers.' It was in this Part most of all that he would have had to mind his admonition to himself, 'to rein in your satirical nature' (entry 634).

It is evident, then, that Berkeley, while still in his early twenties, conceived a plan covering no less than the whole field of philosophy and science as known in his day. When he lighted on what he regarded as his two discoveries, first immaterialism as founded on the axiom '*esse* is *percipi*', and secondly, soon afterwards, the non-existence of abstract ideas, he believed that he had found the keys to all sound knowledge. In his general Introduction he defines his method with reference to the second of these keys. In the first instalment of the *Principles* he lays down his subtly simple theory of knowledge so far as it concerns sense-perception, and gives a preliminary outline of the metaphysics of sensory reality and of mind which he intended to develop in an ordered sequence of Parts. Instead of this sequence we have three virtually independent writings, *De Motu*, *The Analyst*, and *Alciphron* (on morals and Theology), connected indeed by identity of principle and outlook, but each readable by itself. Berkeley has given us not a system, but only the skeleton of a system, though clothed upon here and there with living flesh, and by a miracle of philosophical vision and literary art already informed with a soul.

Why Berkeley abandoned the plan he never revealed, apart from the mention of the loss of the MS. of Part II. Perhaps he was too busy; at certain times of his life he certainly was busy.

Perhaps in his seasons of leisure he had that touch of indolence to which Hume confessed. Perhaps his philosophizing was but a pastime of genius, one only of the brilliant things with which he strewed his life. Perhaps, alternatively or additionally, he struck against certain problems that he could not work out in detail to his satisfaction. The possibility that may be excluded is that he came to have misgivings about the truth of his distinctive doctrines. His diffident remark in his first letter to Johnson (below, p. 282), 'I do not pretend that my books can teach truth,' read in its context, refers not to supposition of error but only to conviction of imperfection of statement, some of it inevitable, for, on this verbal master's contemptuous view of words, truth cannot be taught but only seen for oneself by the direct inspection of one's own ideas. The doctrines of Part I he never disavowed, re-affirming them in his later philosophical writings, and in the latest editions. The second edition of the *Principles* introduced only the *term* 'notion,' not the doctrine it stands for. The omission from the 1752 edition of *Alciphron* of three sections (5-7) dealing with abstract ideas does not indicate a withdrawal of his denial of these, for the denial remains on page after page. *Siris* undoubtedly represents a big change of mood, interest, and emphasis, but neither Professor Luce nor I can see in it any change of basic doctrine.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE 'PRINCIPLES'

The content of the *Principles* bears out the description of its purpose given on the title page, namely, to simplify the sciences (Mathematics, Physics, and Philosophy), to refute the form of scepticism that makes the existence of a corporeal world problematic, and to vindicate theism, and by these means to call knowledge back to the service of man, and man to the service of God.¹ The practicality of the governing motive is characteristic: Berkeley had no respect for purely theoretical thinking. Nevertheless, he believed in its autonomy in respect of method and evidence. He had all the scholar's scruples, and no esteem for

¹ In a letter of 1st March 1710 to Percival he says that his purpose is 'to demonstrate the existence and attributes of God, the immortality of the soul, the reconciliation of God's foreknowledge with freedom of men, and by shewing the emptiness and falseness of several parts of the speculative sciences, to reduce men to the study of religion and things useful.' This statement does less justice than the title page to Berkeley's intellectual passion for the clarification of ideas and the simplification of theory.

authority. If a theistic philosophy had been all that he wanted, he could have got it by simply taking over Descartes', Malebranche's, or Locke's. Instead, pressing for truth as what is both cogent and lucid, and, un-Englishlike, equal in critical and speculative fearlessness, he has given us a closely reasoned and empirically evidenced argument of his own. Its most striking features are its originality and its brevity. It is the simplest of all philosophies, and the simplification is the work of genius.

Expressed in terms of its conclusions, the philosophy of this work is an idealistic theism: everything is either a mind or an object of mind, and there is a Supreme Mind, which has the religious quality that marks out the idea of God. Expressed negatively—and the negations loom large because a Part I has to clear the ground—it is the denial of abstract ideas, of representative perception, of material substance, and of material causality. It may be roughly described as a logical and empirical purification of the Cartesian 'way of ideas' or subjectivism, in the large form given to this by Malebranche and Locke. In another aspect it is the first general critique of modern natural science from a thoroughly modern point of view: accepting the new inductive procedure—observation and experiment as usually the source of hypotheses and always the check upon them, and measurement as the warrant for the use of the mathematical technique—Berkeley aimed at the reduction of the methodological and metaphysical assumptions to a minimum.

So much for characterization in terms of the usual labels. These mean little. In passing beyond them I must, to keep within the limits of an Introduction, confine myself to the barest exegesis of the crucial contentions. I shall take up Berkeley's three outstanding terms—idea, matter, and mind.

'Idea' is used in a peculiar sense. For Locke, as for Descartes, it meant any object of any sort of awareness; for Hume, any object of other than perceptual awareness, *i.e.* of memory and imagination. For Berkeley it meant any *sensory* object, and therefore any corporeal object, whether perceived, remembered, or imagined.¹ It is only of 'ideas' in this sense, which I shall mark with inverted commas, that Berkeley makes his distinctive pronouncements. (1) It is only abstract 'ideas'

¹ Hume's usage was the one already current in ordinary speech. Berkeley himself observes in the *Phil. Comm.* (entry 657a, *cp. Princ.* 33): 'Properly speaking, idea is the picture of the imagination's making.' He records Descartes' usage in entry 819: 'Cartesius per ideam vult omne id quod habet esse objectivum in intellectu.'

that are denied, on the plain ground that sensory objects are essentially concrete, particular, picturable. There are, indeed, imageless thoughts, but not of such objects, for when all particularity is thought away from these, what is left is not a concept but nothing, the content having entirely vanished. Even if thought did have the power of abstracting imageless concepts from the corporeal, the concept would not be of the corporeal, this being by nature sensory. Space without colour, space without determinations, and colour that is no particular colour, are just not space and colour at all. Mind, justice, likeness, and suchlike are not here in question, for they are not objects of sense. (2) '*Esse* is *percipi*' is applied only to 'ideas,' the *esse* of the mental being *percipere*. It is an axiom for Berkeley, a self-evident definition, what he uses as the *a priori* ground of his immaterialism (see Sect. 21). It means that it is a contradiction in terms to speak of anything corporeal as either imperceptible or entirely unperceived. The corporeal *means* the sensory, and the sensory *means* what can be or is being sensed; colour *means* what is visible, shape what is visible and also tangible, smell what can be smelled, and so on. There is no difference here between the so-called primary and secondary qualities. In all this Berkeley is not repeating the subjectivism, logically entailing solipsism, of his predecessors. He is not exploiting the 'egocentric predicament.' He is not saying that each of us can know directly nothing but the modifications of his own mind. He is saying that the corporeal, from top to bottom, superficially and radically, is the visible, tangible, etc., that it is relative not to my accidental sensing, but to sensing as such; that therefore, though I can coherently think of a tree as not seen by me, I cannot think of it as not seen at all. The sensible has neither meaning nor existence out of all relation to sensing. And only minds can see, touch, smell, taste, and hear. Only minds can have 'ideas'; only in relation to minds can 'ideas' exist.

The Cartesian subjectivism was a commonplace in Berkeley's day. The *Commentaries* shows that he originally founded his immaterialism on it. It shows also that he overcame it. The thrill with which he eventually records (entry 279) his discovery of the axiom by which, he believed, his philosophy stands or falls, would be inexplicable if in '*esse* is *percipi*' he were simply reaffirming the philosophical commonplace of his day. 'Tis on the discovering of the nature and meaning and import of existence," he says in another entry (491), 'that I chiefly insist. . . .

This I think wholly new.' The novel point is that the corporeal is *meaningless* apart from relation to mind. In the founding principle of his system he is defining the nature of corporeal existence (cp. Sect. 89).

The choice of the term 'idea' for anything corporeal was determined by that definition. The term marks not the merely empirical but the essential relation of corporeal qualities as such to awareness as such. This relation does not, however, subtilize, etherealize, or mentalize the corporeal. The corporeal is exactly what it is experienced to be—the extended, coloured, hard, and so forth, qualities that cannot be assimilated to mind. The radical qualitative difference between the corporeal and the mental is one of Berkeley's most frequently recurring themes. 'Ideas' are not in the mind as emotions are, as parts of its nature, as qualifications of it. '*Esse* is *percipi*' has to be read in two ways, in order to keep in view a double emphasis—the corporeal can only be an *object* to mind, and it can *only* be an object to mind.

Because Berkeley takes the corporeal exactly as it appears, besides preserving its corporeality he preserves its givenness. He never questions, and none of his presuppositions or conclusions requires him to question, the plain fact that in sensation 'ideas' are received, not produced, by us. Real 'ideas,' as distinguished from imaginary ones, are those that 'are not fictions of the mind perceiving them' (Sect. 36). He has no patience with the hypothesis, arbitrary because both gratuitous and unverifiable, that our minds have an occult power of originating sensations. The supposition of occult powers anywhere offended him. That the world of sense is not a ghost of the corporeal but the corporeal itself, and that, as it appears to be, so it really is, independent of the mind of all finite perceivers, is his persistent, and for his day eccentric, affirmation against the Cartesian doubt. He found intolerable Malebranche's confession that the real existence of a corporeal world is philosophically unproved, and must be believed on the authority of revelation alone, as being implied in Scripture. This was for him the *reductio ad absurdum* of the subjectivist view of sensation. He was as pious as the Oratorian, but he could not bring himself to make an affair of piety what was clearly an affair of common sense. Epistemologically he was a realist. The definition that the *esse* of 'ideas' is their *percipi* holds good; but experience proves that actually perceived 'ideas' are not tied to our minds. Therefore, as an inexorable logical require-

ment of the definition, we must postulate a cosmic mind. The only mind to which Berkeley ties them is God's.

Perceived 'ideas,' then, are real. Matter is not. This second key-term of the *Principles*, like the first, has a narrowed meaning. It stands not for the corporeal as such ('idea' being the term for this), but for the corporeal in either or both of two senses, namely, as inaccessible to the finite perceiving mind, or anyhow as having its existence independently of any perceiving mind whatever. The simple reason why Berkeley takes the term in these two special senses is that it was so taken by the Cartesians, Locke, and the contemporary physicists ; and it was all these that he was arguing against—*Berkeleyus contra mundum*.

His position follows from '*esse* is *percipi*.' What he is denying is the existence of anything corporeal behind the perceived corporeal world. The corporeal is all that it is perceived to be, and nothing else ; it is entirely an assemblage of 'ideas.' So far he is a phenomenalist, though phenomena are for him objective. Unlike Hume, who was a subjectivist and a peculiar kind of agnostic (championing irrational belief), Berkeley leaves unquestioned both the right and the ability of reason to infer from the given to something beyond it ; but he insists that in all such inference the empirical analogies must be adhered to, and incoherent logical constructions be avoided. The gravamen of his charge against his predecessors and contemporaries is that the concept of material substance, or of substantial matter, fails to satisfy these conditions. Imperceptible matter, he says in effect, cannot be knowable, and cannot even be material.

On the Cartesian definition of substance as '*res*, *quae nulla alia re indigeat ad existendum*,' material substance is directly excluded by the *esse-percipi* principle. Berkeley's particular arguments are directed chiefly against the conception of material substance which Locke had adopted—an unknowable somewhat that underlies all known corporeal qualities. In the first place, the concept is a difficult one. The alleged substance, being *ex hypothesi* imperceptible, cannot have any of the qualities that give empirical meaning to the term material, so that calling it material is a contradiction ; and to seek to save its materiality by allowing it some of those qualities is to make it perceptible, which is again a contradiction. In the second place, the concept creates an insoluble epistemological problem. To postulate another material world behind the only accessible one, and to call it the real world and the known one merely a copy of it, is a pernicious as well as an

unnecessary duplication, for in making it we are subjectivizing the data of sense-experience, and leaving no room for any verifiable assertion about the real world. This is scepticism, from which there is no escape unless the real is the given. We cannot know whether the real is like the given unless it is perceptible, and if it is like the given it is perceptible, and therefore consists wholly of 'ideas.' In the third place, the concept explains nothing, even if we waive its incoherence. On the one hand, it does not account for the persisting existence of corporeal phenomena, as holding them together when we are not perceiving them, for experience does not reveal, and logic (*esse-percipi*) does not warrant, any support of such phenomena except the cognitive one. They are not modes of any substance, but are wholly objects to a subject ; and that subject is God essentially, and each of us accidentally. On the other hand, to postulate material substance as the cause of corporeal phenomena is to declare an *ad hoc* fiction, not a *vera causa*. We must certainly require a cause, but how anything material could produce an experience is by common consent inconceivable. As Locke admitted, the only causal power we ever know as a datum is that of our own minds, in our volitions, so that, by the analogy of experience, we must construe the cosmic cause as a mind. The corporeal universe is produced by the divine will and maintained by the divine cognition. In this way Berkeley grounds his twofold contention that there is nothing material behind 'ideas,' and that nevertheless 'ideas' are not self-existent.

Such a doctrine of the corporeal world purges Physics and Mathematics by its empirical and logical rigour. The principle of causality is untouched, but has no application in the purely scientific study of Nature, for the corporeal never in fact reveals the force or the necessity involved in the truly causal relation, and is by nature, through its dependence on perceiving, inert or impotent. Natural laws are simply factual regularities of co-existence and succession, making prediction, and therewith reasonable living, possible : there is no inexorable mechanism, but only benevolent disposition. The wasteful probing for a corporeal behind the corporeal is excluded. Applied Mathematics, reduced to an empirical science, is emptied of absolutes, infinites, and infinitesimals : space and time are not independent existents but properties or relations of 'ideas,' and are therefore finite both in their maxima and in their minima. Absoluteness and infinity are the prerogatives of God. It may justly be said that Berkeley's

Principles is as much a critical commentary on Newton's *Principia* as on Locke's *Essay* or Malebranche's *Recherche*.

Of mind little is said in Part I because it was to be the subject of the lost Part II. Berkeley treats of it only in its relation to the corporeal, as what holds this in existence by perceiving, and what creates and changes it by willing. It is the opposite of the corporeal. The latter is dependent, passive, and extended ; the former is self-existing (the divine mind absolutely, finite minds naturally), active, and unextended, and therefore not capable of the disintegration which, happening to bodies, is called death. Inevitably we have no 'idea' of it ; when we make it an object, we make it neither picturable nor passive, but apprehend it as it is. To mark it off, as object, from 'ideas,' Berkeley introduced the term 'notion' in the second edition (Sects. 89, 140, 142 ; also *Alc.*, 3rd ed., vii, Sect. 5), though in doing so he was only returning to his original intention (See Sect. 140, MS. reading). The term designates relations as well, on the ground that they involve a mental act (Sect. 142 ; *cp. Alc.*, 3rd ed., vii, Sects. 12, 14).

The doctrine of mind or spirit culminates in the demonstration, from the fact and nature of the sensible world, of a Supreme Spirit as the producer and sustainer of that world, and as directly and ubiquitously operative within it, so that every time we open our eyes what we behold is, in a guarded, non-pantheistic sense of the term, a theophany.

ANALYSIS OF THE 'PRINCIPLES'

Introduction (to all the projected Parts) :

Sects. 1-5.—The obscurities, uncertainties, and contradictions in philosophy are due neither to intractability in the subject-matter nor to any insuperable weakness in our faculties, but to false principles.

Sects. 6-9.—The chief of these is the supposition that there are abstract 'ideas,' *i.e.* that we can and do (a) apprehend separately qualities that cannot exist separately, *e.g.* space without colour ; and (b) form unparticularized 'ideas' of what is common to all qualities or things of the same kind, *e.g.* colour-in-general, and man-in-general.

Sects. 10-17.—Criticism of the supposition. (a) Introspection reveals neither of these alleged types of abstract 'ideas.'

(b) They are not required to give meaning to general terms for the communication of knowledge. (c) Those of the second type are incoherent. (d) They are not required for the enlargement of knowledge through the proof of general propositions. All 'ideas' are in fact and of necessity particular in *content*; any 'idea' becomes general in *function* when made to stand for all other 'ideas' of the same sort.

Sects. 18-20.—Source of the supposition—the assumption that to every general name there must correspond, if it is to be significant, a wholly general 'idea.' This is untrue in fact, and impossible; and some names are intended not to communicate anything to the understanding but directly to evoke an emotion or attitude.

Sects. 21-25.—The advantage of recognizing the impossibility of abstract 'ideas'—we are freed from disputes that are merely verbal. The veil of words lifted, we cannot mistake what ideas we have, what are their contents and relations.

Part I, Sects. 1-33.—The doctrine of immaterialism expounded :

Sects. 1-7.—*Esse* is *percipi*. The objects of knowledge fall into three classes—those of sense, the mind's own states, and the objects of memory and imagination. That objects of the second and third kinds do not exist apart from a subject is unquestioned. The same is true of the objects of sense, for their whole nature is to be sensible, *i.e.* relative to a subject. To suppose them existing independently is to suppose an abstract 'idea.' That the *esse* of 'ideas' is their *percipi* is a self-evident truth. Since the sensible cannot exist in anything that cannot sense, the only substance is mind; and if the sensible has any existence apart from finite minds, it can only be by relation to an infinite mind.

Sects. 8-15.—The view that the objects of sense are copies of things like them independent of mind involves a contradiction, for if these hypothetical things are perceptible, they are not behind 'ideas' but are themselves 'ideas'; and if they are not perceptible, they cannot be like what is perceptible. An 'idea' can be like nothing but another 'idea.' The distinction of primary and secondary qualities cannot be maintained, for (a) they are equally 'ideas,' (b) they cannot be experienced or conceived apart from one another, and (c) the former are as relative as the latter to our position and state. Apart from one another and from a subject, they are abstract 'ideas.'

Sects. 16–24.—The supposition of an independent matter as the substratum of ‘ideas’ is both untenable and unnecessary. It has no evidence from sense, since by this we know only ‘ideas’ ; nor from reason, for material substance conceived as the support of ‘ideas’ is an empty metaphor, and as the cause of ‘ideas’ is admittedly unintelligible. Anyhow, the sufficient disproof of an independent matter is that corporeal qualities are, because sensible, essentially relative to a subject.

Sects. 25–29.—The only cause of ‘ideas’ is mind. If ‘ideas’ had active power, we should know it, for their whole nature is manifest ; but they are plainly passive. Hence they can be neither causes nor copies of causes. Mind, however, is experienced as active (hence there can be no ‘idea’ of it) ; it is the only producer of ‘ideas’ we have evidence of ; therefore the cause of ‘ideas’ not produced by our minds must be some other mind.

Sects. 30–33.—The cause of the ‘ideas’ that are *given* to us is God, for they bespeak infinite power, wisdom, and benevolence. Such ‘ideas’ are realities, distinguishable from the ‘ideas’ of the imagination ; but they are nevertheless ideas in the sense that they cannot exist apart from a perceiving mind.

Sects. 34–84.—*Sixteen objections to the preceding doctrine anticipated and answered :*

(i) *Sects.* 34–40.—That it makes Nature an illusion. No ; it omits nothing from Nature but the hypothetical material substance. (ii) *Sect.* 41.—That it destroys the distinction between the real and the imaginary. No ; it preserves both the evidence and the significance of the distinction. (iii) *Sects.* 42–44.—That it ignores the perceived externality of visual objects. But externality is not in fact seen. (iv) *Sects.* 45–48.—That it makes things fugitive, in continual creation and re-creation. The objection is just only against the Schoolmen and the moderns, who regard objects of sense as private to the perceiving mind. (v) *Sect.* 49.—That it makes mind extended. No ; the corporeal is an object to, not a mode of, mind. (vi) *Sect.* 50.—That the denial of material substance deprives Mechanics of its chief principle of explanation. No ; material substance has explained nothing. (vii) *Sects.* 51–53.—That the denial of material causality is paradoxical. Only verbally ; and the same denial has been made by Schoolmen and moderns. (viii) *Sects.* 54–55.—That the belief in matter is universal. No ; only in the name ‘matter.’ Anyhow,

it used to be universally believed that the earth is flat and stationary. (ix) *Sects. 56–57.*—That the universality of the belief has to be accounted for. Yes ; by the recognition that our sensations have causes extraneous to ourselves. (x) *Sects. 58–59.*—That immaterialism is inconsistent with certain assured conclusions of Mechanics, *e.g.* that the earth moves. True, this motion is not perceived ; but immaterialism allows what would be perceived in possible conditions. (xi) *Sects. 60–66.*—That it makes inexplicable the elaborateness of the machinery of Nature. This objection cannot weigh against an *a priori* truth ; it has no theological advantage ; and it is wrong in supposing that causally impotent phenomena are useless, for they are signs that, by their regularity, make reliable expectation possible. (xii) *Sects. 67–72.*—That matter may exist as the ‘occasion’ of ‘ideas.’ But an imperceptible substance without accidents can explain nothing. [*Sects. 73–76.*—A digression on the reasons for the supposition of material substance.] (xiii) *Sects. 77–78.*—That we only lack a sense for the perception of matter. But a new sense could only give us new ‘ideas.’ (xiv) *Sect. 79.*—That the existence of matter is at least possible, the concept being free from contradiction. It is not, unless terms are used arbitrarily. (xv) *Sects. 80–81.*—That the concept of matter is unobjectionable when defined negatively or as equivalent to bare existence. But then it is only an abstract ‘idea,’ *i.e.* nothing. (xvi) *Sects. 82–84.*—That immaterialism is incompatible with Scripture. No ; the reality of corporeal things there assumed is preserved.

Sects. 85–156.—Consequences of the doctrine :

(a) So far as they concern ‘ideas.’ *Sects. 85–91.*—The riddance of material substance precludes scepticism by removing the only ground for doubting the veracity of sense, namely, the assumption that there are imperceptible corporeal things. *Sects. 92–96.*—The sane riddance precludes atheism. *Sects. 97–100.*—The riddance of abstract ‘ideas’ frees us from the perplexities raised by the terms Time, Space, and Motion. *Sects. 101–17.*—And also simplifies Mechanics by reducing its laws to observed regularities (removing the *a priori* assumption of necessary uniformity, and leaving room for teleological explanation) ; and by dispensing with the concepts of pure and absolute Time, Space, and Motion. *Sects. 118–34.*—And further, simplifies Arithmetic by dispensing with number in the abstract (numerals being signs not of number-concepts but of numerable things) ; and Geometry

by dispensing with infinitesimals (lines, being only 'ideas,' are divisible into nothing smaller than *minima sensibilia*).

(b) So far as they concern minds. *Sects.* 135-42.—The plea that we are ignorant of, or may be sceptical about, mind because we have no 'idea' of it is made groundless. Mind is known as directly as 'ideas' are, but as a different kind of object. The term 'existence' does not apply to the two kinds of objects in the same sense. *Sects.* 143-44.—The mischief due to the use of abstraction and material analogies in the description of mind is guarded against. *Sects.* 145-50.—Each of us knows other minds not directly but by analogical inference from the 'ideas' they evoke in us. The evidence for God is of the same kind, but far more abundant, and therefore more cogent. *Sects.* 151-54.—The inference from the corporeal universe to God is not prejudiced by the phenomena of natural evil. *Sects.* 155-56.—Hortatory conclusion: the practical religious motive and value of the doctrine.

A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge

The Text

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¹ [The Dedication was omitted from the Second Edition. It is addressed to the eighth Earl, who was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland 1707-8. Berkeley was introduced to him in London in January 1713, and the acquaintance ripened into friendship. It was to the same Earl that Locke had dedicated his *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690).—Ed.]

² ['our Society.' This, over the signature of a writer advertised on the title page as a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, can only mean 'this College.' Lord Pembroke had made a gift to the Library of £500 for books in 1698; and a Parliamentary grant of £5,000 in 1709 for a new Library building, Professor Luce has suggested, may have been procured through his influence.—Ed.]

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
Thomas, Earl of Pembroke, &c.

KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER
AND ONE OF THE LORDS OF
HER MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE
PRIVY COUNCIL ¹

MY LORD,

You'll, perhaps, wonder that an obscure person, who has not the honour to be known to Your Lordship, should presume to address you in this manner. But that a man, who has written something with a design to promote *useful knowledge* and *religion* in the world, should make choice of Your Lordship for his patron, will not be thought strange by any one that is not altogether unacquainted with the present state of the Church and learning, and consequently ignorant how great an ornament and support you are to both. Yet, nothing could have induced me to make you this present of my poor endeavours, were I not encouraged by that candour and native goodness, which is so bright a part in Your Lordship's character. I might add, my Lord, that the extraordinary favour and bounty you have been pleased to shew towards our Society,² gave me hopes, you'd not be unwilling to countenance the studies of one of its members. These considerations determined me to lay this treatise at Your Lordship's feet. And the rather, because I was ambitious to have it known, that I am with the truest and most profound respect, on account of that learning and virtue which the world so justly admires in Your Lordship,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble and devoted Servant,

GEORGE BERKELEY.

THE PREFACE¹

What I here make public has, after a long and scrupulous inquiry, seem'd to me evidently true, and not unuseful to be known, particularly to those who are tainted with scepticism, or want a demonstration of the existence and materiality of GOD, or the natural immortality of the soul. Whether it be so or no, I am content the reader should impartially examine. Since I do not think my self any farther concerned for the success of what I have written, than as it is agreeable to truth. But to the end this may not suffer, I make it my request that the reader suspend his judgment, till he has once, at least, read the whole through with that degree of attention and thought which the subject matter shall seem to deserve. For as there are some passages that, taken by themselves, are very liable (nor could it be remedied) to gross misinterpretation, and to be charged with most absurd consequences, which, nevertheless, upon an entire perusal will appear not to follow from them: so likewise, though the whole should be read over, yet, if this be done transiently, 'tis very probable my sense may be mistaken; but to a thinking reader, I flatter my self, it will be throughout clear and obvious. As for the characters of novelty and singularity, which some of the following notions may seem to bear, 'tis, I hope, needless to make any apology on that account. He must surely be either very weak, or very little acquainted with the sciences, who shall reject a truth, that is capable of demonstration, for no other reason but because it's newly known and contrary to the prejudices of mankind. Thus much I thought fit to premise, in order to prevent, if possible, the hasty censures of a sort of men, who are too apt to condemn an opinion before they rightly comprehend it.

¹ [The Preface was omitted from the Second Edition.—Ed.]

INTRODUCTION

1 Philosophy being nothing else but the study of wisdom and truth, it may with reason be expected, that those who have spent most time and pains in it should enjoy a greater calm and serenity of mind, a greater clearness and evidence of knowledge, and be less disturbed with doubts and difficulties than other men. Yet so it is we see the illiterate bulk of mankind that walk the high-road of plain, common sense, and are governed by the dictates of Nature, for the most part easy and undisturbed. To them nothing that's familiar appears unaccountable or difficult to comprehend. They complain not of any want of evidence ¹⁰ in their senses, and are out of all danger of becoming *sceptics*. But no sooner do we depart from sense and instinct to follow the light of a superior principle, to reason, meditate, and reflect on the nature of things, but a thousand scruples spring up in our minds, concerning those things which before we seemed fully to comprehend. Prejudices and errors of sense do from all parts discover themselves to our view; and endeavouring to correct these by reason we are insensibly drawn into uncouth paradoxes, difficulties, and inconsistencies, which multiply and grow upon us as we advance in speculation; till at length, having wander'd ²⁰ through many intricate mazes, we find our selves just where we were, or, which is worse, sit down in a forlorn scepticism.

2 The cause of this is thought to be the obscurity of things, or the natural weakness and imperfection of our understandings. It is said¹ the faculties we have are few, and those designed by Nature for the support and comfort of life, and not to penetrate into the inward essence and constitution of things. Besides, the mind of man being finite, when it treats of things which partake of infinity, it is not to be wondered at, if it run into absurdities and contradictions; out of which it is impossible it should ever ³⁰ extricate it self, it being of the nature of infinite not to be comprehended by that which is finite.

3 But perhaps we may be too partial to our selves in placing

¹ *26 comfort—(A) pleasure.*

¹ ['It is said.' The reference is probably to a very commonly expressed view, rather than specifically to Locke (e.g. *Essay*, I i 5; IV iii 6).—Ed.]

the fault originally in our faculties, and not rather in the wrong use we make of them. It is a hard thing to suppose, that right deductions from true principles should ever end in consequences which cannot be maintained or made consistent. We should believe that God has dealt more bountifully with the sons of men, than to give them a strong desire for that knowledge, which He had placed quite out of their reach. This were not agreeable to the wonted, indulgent methods of Providence, which, whatever appetites it may have implanted in the creatures, doth usually 10 furnish them with such means as, if rightly made use of, will not fail to satisfy them. Upon the whole, I am inclined to think that the far greater part, if not all, of those difficulties which have hitherto amused philosophers, and blocked up the way to knowledge, are entirely owing to our selves. That we have first raised a dust, and then complain, we cannot see.

4 My purpose therefore is, to try if I can discover what those principles are, which have introduced all that doubtfulness and uncertainty, those absurdities and contradictions into the several sects of philosophy¹; insomuch that the wisest men have thought 20 our ignorance incurable, conceiving it to arise from the natural dulness and limitation of our faculties. And surely it is a work well deserving our pains, to make a strict inquiry concerning the first principles of *human knowledge*, to sift and examine them on all sides: especially since there may be some grounds to suspect that those lets and difficulties, which stay and embarrass the mind in its search after truth, do not spring from any darkness and intricacy in the objects, or natural defect in the understanding, so much as from false principles which have been insisted on, and might have been avoided.

30 5 How difficult and discouraging soever this attempt may seem, when I consider how many great and extraordinary men have gone before me in the same designs: yet I am not without some hopes, upon the consideration that the largest views are not always the clearest, and that he who is short-sighted will be

l 31 how many—(A) what a number of very. l 32 same—(A) like.

¹ [The chief of the impugned principles are—that there are abstract ‘ideas’; that ‘ideas’ can be copies of what is by definition unperceivable; that the corporeal exists independently of any mental apprehension whatever; that the corporeal has causal power, *i.e.* originates change; and that mind is, or would be if our knowing were adequate, an ‘idea,’ *i.e.* an object of the same general kind, on the same plane, as the objects of sense. There are derivative principles, such as the untrustworthiness of the senses, and the infinite divisibility of matter.—Ed.]

obliged to draw the object nearer, and may, perhaps, by a close and narrow survey discern that which had escaped far better eyes.

6 In order to prepare the mind of the reader for the easier conceiving what follows, it is proper to premise somewhat, by way of introduction, concerning the nature and abuse of language. But the unravelling this matter leads me in some measure to anticipate my design, by taking notice of what seems to have had a chief part in rendering speculation intricate and perplexed, and to have occasioned innumerable errors and difficulties in almost all parts of knowledge. And that is the opinion that the ¹⁰ mind hath a power of framing *abstract ideas* or notions of things.¹ He who is not a perfect stranger to the writings and disputes of philosophers, must needs acknowledge that no small part of them are spent about abstract ideas. These are in a more ¹¹ especial manner, thought to be the object of those sciences which go by the name of Logic and Metaphysics, and of all that which passes under the notion of the most abstracted and sublime learning, in all which one shall scarce find any question handled in such a manner, as does not suppose their existence in the mind, and that it is well acquainted with them. ²⁰

7 It is agreed on all hands, that the qualities or modes of things do never really exist each of them apart by it self, and separated from all others, but are mixed, as it were, and blended together, several in the same object. But we are told, the mind being able to consider each quality singly, or abstracted from those other qualities with which it is united, does by that means frame to it self abstract ideas. For example, there is perceived by sight an object extended, coloured, and moved : this mixed or compound idea the mind resolving into its simple, constituent

^{l 4} it is proper—(A) I thought it proper.

¹ [Berkeley's rejection of abstract 'ideas' was pronounced by Hume to be 'one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that has been made of late years' (*Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739, I vii). What Berkeley denies is the possibility of our having or forming as our total object either (a) a sensory quality that cannot be realized alone in perception, e.g. space without colour and *vice versa*, or motion without a body moving, or (b) a purely general sensory quality, e.g. abstract extension, colour, triangularity, animality. The total object is always concrete, particular; although we can restrict our interest, and so far our attention, to some part or aspect, there are certain aspects which we can never completely isolate. A universal is a particular 'idea' used universally by being made to stand for all other 'ideas' similar to it in a given respect; i.e. universality is not a quality but a function (Sect. 15). The whole discussion is confined to the realm of objects made known to us in sense-perception.—Ed.]

parts, and viewing each by it self, exclusive of the rest, does frame the abstract ideas of extension, colour, and motion. Not that it is possible for colour or motion to exist without extension : but only that the mind can frame to it self by *abstraction* the idea of colour exclusive of extension, and of motion exclusive of both colour and extension.

8 Again, the mind having observed that in the particular extensions perceived by sense, there is something common and alike in all, and some other things peculiar, as this or that figure ¹⁰ or magnitude, which distinguish them one from another ; it considers apart or singles out by it self that which is common, making thereof a most abstract idea of extension, which is neither line, surface, nor solid, nor has any figure or magnitude but is an idea entirely prescinded from all these. So likewise the mind by leaving out of the particular colours perceived by sense, that which distinguishes them one from another, and retaining that only which is common to all, makes an idea of colour in abstract which is neither red, nor blue, nor white, nor any other determinate colour. And in like manner by considering motion abstractedly ²⁰ not only from the body moved, but likewise from the figure it describes, and all particular directions and velocities, the abstract idea of motion is framed ; which equally corresponds to all particular motions whatsoever that may be perceived by sense.

9 And as the mind frames to it self abstract ideas of qualitics or modes, so does it, by the same precision or mental separation, attain abstract ideas of the more compounded beings, which include several coexistent qualitics. For example, the mind having observed that Peter, James, and John, resemble each other, ³⁰ in certain common agreements of shape and other qualitics, leaves out of the complex or compounded idea it has of Peter, James, and any other particular man, that which is peculiar to each, retaining only what is common to all ; and so makes an abstract idea wherein all the particulars equally partake, abstracting entirely from and cutting off all those circumstances and differences, which might determine it to any particular existence. And after this manner it is said we come by the abstract idea of *man* or, if you please, humanity or human nature ; wherein it is true, there is included colour, because there is no man but has ⁴⁰ some colour, but then it can be neither white, nor black, nor any

l 18 nor any other determinate colour—(A) etc. l 29 John—(A) John, etc. l 32 James, and any other particular man—(A) James, etc.

particular colour ; because there is no one particular colour wherein all men partake. So likewise there is included stature, but then it is neither tall stature nor low stature, nor yet middle stature, but something abstracted from all these. And so of the rest. Moreover, there being a great variety of other creatures that partake in some parts, but not all, of the complex idea of *man*, the mind leaving out those parts which are peculiar to men, and retaining those only which are common to all the living creatures, frameth the idea of *animal*, which abstracts not only from all particular men, but also all birds, beasts, fishes, and insects. The constituent parts of the abstract idea of animal are body, life, sense, and spontaneous motion. By *body* is meant, body without any particular shape or figure, there being no one shape or figure common to all animals, without covering, either of hair or feathers, or scales, &c. nor yet naked : hair, feathers, scales, and nakedness being the distinguishing properties of particular animals, and for that reason left out of the *abstract idea*. Upon the same account the spontaneous motion must be neither walking, nor flying, nor creeping, it is nevertheless a motion, but what that motion is, it is not easy to conceive. 20

10 Whether others have this wonderful faculty of *abstracting their ideas*, they best can tell : for my self I find indeed I have a faculty of imagining, or representing to my self the ideas of those particular things I have perceived and of variously compounding and dividing them. I can imagine a man with two heads or the upper parts of a man joined to the body of a horse. I can consider the hand, the eye, the nose, each by it self abstracted or separated from the rest of the body. But then whatever hand or eye I imagine, it must have some particular shape and colour. Likewise the idea of man that I frame to my self, must be either 30 of a white, or a black, or a tawny, a straight, or a crooked, a tall, or a low, or a middle-sized man. I cannot by any effort of thought conceive the abstract idea above described. And it is equally impossible for me to form the abstract idea of motion distinct from the body moving, and which is neither swift nor slow, curvilinear nor rectilinear ; and the like may be said of all other abstract general ideas whatsoever. To be plain, I own my self able to abstract in one sense, as when I consider some particular parts or qualities separated from others, with which though they are united in some object, yet, it is possible they may really exist 40

l 22 I find indeed I have—(A) I dare be confident I have it not. I have indeed.

l 37 To be plain . . . abstraction (these three sentences added in the list of errata in A).

without them. But I deny that I can abstract one from another, or conceive separately, those qualities which it is impossible should exist so separated ; or that I can frame a general notion by abstracting from particulars in the manner aforesaid. Which two last are the proper acceptations of *abstraction*. And there are grounds to think most men will acknowledge themselves to be in my case. The generality of men which are simple and illiterate never pretend to *abstract notions*. It's said they are difficult and not to be attained without pains and study. We may therefore 10 reasonably conclude that, if such there be, they are confined only to the learned.

11 I proceed to examine what can be alleged in defence of the doctrine of abstraction, and try if I can discover what it is that inclines the men of speculation to embrace an opinion, so remote from common sense as that seems to be. There has been a late deservedly esteemed philosopher,¹ who, no doubt, has given it very much countenance by seeming to think the having abstract general ideas is what puts the widest difference in point of understanding betwixt man and beast. 'The having of general ideas 20 (saith he) is that which puts a perfect distinction betwixt man and brutes, and is an excellency which the faculties of brutes do by no means attain unto. For it is evident we observe no footsteps in them of making use of general signs for universal ideas ; from which we have reason to imagine that they have not the faculty of *abstracting* or making general ideas, since they have no use of words or any other general signs. *And a little after*. Therefore, I think, we may suppose that it is in this that the species of brutes are discriminated from men, and 'tis that proper difference wherein they are wholly separated, and which at last widens to 30 so wide a distance. For if they have any ideas at all, and are not bare machines (as some would have them) we cannot deny them to have some reason. It seems as evident to me that they do some of them in certain instances reason as that they have sense, but it is only in particular ideas, just as they receive them from their senses. They are the best of them tied up within those narrow bounds, and have not (as I think) the faculty to enlarge them by any kind of *abstraction*.' *Essay on Hum. Underst.* B.2. C.11. Sect 10. and 11. I readily agree with this learned author, that the faculties

l 1 one from another—(A) from one another. l 16 late deservedly—(A) late excellent and deservedly.

¹ [I.e. John Locke, whose *Essay concerning Human Understanding* first appeared in 1690.—Ed.]

of brutes can by no means attain to *abstraction*. But then if this be made the distinguishing property of that sort of animals, I fear a great many of those that pass for men must be reckoned into their number. The reason that is here assigned why we have no grounds to think brutes have abstract general ideas, is that we observe in them no use of words or any other general signs ; which is built on this supposition, to wit, that the making use of words, implies the having general ideas. From which it follows, that men who use language are able to abstract or generalize their ideas. That this is the sense and arguing of the 10 author will further appear by his answering the question he in another place puts. 'Since all things that exist are only particulars, how come we by general terms ?' His answer is, 'Words become general by being made the signs of general ideas.' *Essay on Hum. Underst. B.3. C.3. Sect. 6.* But it seems that a word becomes general by being made the sign, not of an abstract general idea but, of several particular ideas, any one of which it indifferently suggests to the mind. For example, when it is said *the change of motion is proportional to the impressed force*, or that *whatever has extension is divisible* ; these propositions are to be understood of 20 motion and extension in general, and nevertheless it will not follow that they suggest to my thoughts an idea of motion without a body moved, or any determinate direction and velocity, or that I must conceive an abstract general idea of extension, which is neither line, surface nor solid, neither great nor small, black, white, nor red, nor of any other determinate colour. It is only implied that whatever motion I consider, whether it be swift or slow, perpendicular, horizontal or oblique, or in whatever object, the axiom concerning it holds equally true. As does the other of every particular extension, it matters not whether line, 30 surface or solid, whether of this or that magnitude or figure.

12 By observing how ideas become general, we may the better judge how words are made so. And here it is to be noted that I do not deny absolutely there are general ideas, but only that there are any *abstract general ideas* : for in the passages above quoted, wherein there is mention of general ideas, it is always supposed that they are formed by *abstraction*, after the manner set forth in Sect. 8 and 9. Now if we will annex a meaning to our words, and speak only of what we can conceive, I believe we shall

1 15 But it seems—(A) *To this I cannot assent being of opinion.* 1 23 *direction and velocity*—(A) *direction, velocity, etc.* 1 26 *nor of any other determinate colour*—(A) *etc.* 1 31 *figure*—(A) *figure, etc.* 1 35 *passages above*—(A) *passages we have.*

acknowledge, that an idea, which considered in it self is particular, becomes general, by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort. To make this plain by an example, suppose a geometrician is demonstrating the method, of cutting a line in two equal parts. He draws, for instance, a black line of an inch in length, this which in it self is a particular line is nevertheless with regard to its signification general, since as it is there used, it represents all particular lines whatsover ; for that what is demonstrated of it, is demonstrated of all lines or, in 10 other words, of a line in general. And as that particular line becomes general, by being made a sign, so the name *line* which taken absolutely is particular, by being a sign is made general. And as the former owes its generality, not to its being the sign of an abstract or general line, but of all particular right lines that may possibly exist, so the latter must be thought to derive its generality from the same cause, namely, the various particular lines which it indifferently denotes.

13 To give the reader a yet clearer view of the nature of abstract ideas, and the uses they are thought necessary to, I 20 shall add one more passage out of the *Essay on Human Understanding*, which is as follows. ‘Abstract ideas are not so obvious or easy to children or the yet unexercised mind as particular ones. If they seem so to grown men, it is only because by constant and familiar use they are made so. For when we nicely reflect upon them, we shall find that general ideas are fictions and contrivances of the mind, that carry difficulty with them, and do not so easily offer themselves, as we are apt to imagine. For example, does it not require some pains and skill to form the general idea of a triangle (which is yet none of the most abstract 30 comprehensive and difficult) for it must be neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but *all and none* of these at once. In effect, it is something imperfect that cannot exist, an idea wherein some parts of several different and *inconsistent* ideas are put together. It is true the mind in this imperfect state has need of such ideas, and makes all the haste to them it can, for the convenience of communication and enlargement of knowledge, to both which it is naturally very much inclined. But yet one has reason to suspect such ideas are marks of our imperfection. At least this is enough to shew that the most 40 abstract and general ideas are not those that the mind is first and most easily acquainted with, nor such as its earliest know-
l 8 for that—(A) so that.

ledge is conversant about.' B.4. C.7. Sect. 9. If any man has the faculty of framing in his mind such an idea of a triangle as is here described, it is in vain to pretend to dispute him out of it, nor would I go about it. All I desire is, that the reader would fully and certainly inform himself whether he has such an idea or no. And this, methinks, can be no hard task for any one to perform. What more easy than for any one to look a little into his own thoughts, and there try whether he has, or can attain to have, an idea that shall correspond with the description that is here given of the general idea of a triangle, which is, *neither 10 oblique, nor rectangle, equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenoñ, but all and none of these at once?*

14 Much is here said of the difficulty that abstract ideas carry with them, and the pains and skill requisite to the forming them. And it is on all hands agreed that there is need of great toil and labour of the mind, to emancipate our thoughts from particular objects, and raise them to those sublime speculations that are conversant about abstract ideas. From all which the natural consequence shiould seem to be, that so difficult a thing as the forming abstract ideas was not necessary for *communication*, 20 which is so easy and familiar to all sorts of men. But we are told, if they seem obvious and easy to grown men, *It is only because by constant and familiar use they are made so.* Now I would fain know at what time it is, men are employed in surmounting that difficulty, and furnishing themselfes with those necessary helps for discourse. It cannot be when they are grown up, for then it seems they are not conscious of any such pains-taking; it remains therefore to be the business of their childhood. And surely, the great and multiplied labour of framing abstract notions, will be found a hard task for that tender age. Is it not a hard thing to imagine, 30 that a couple of children cannot prate together, of their sugar-plumbs and rattles and the rest of their little trinkets, till they have first tacked together numberless inconsistencies, and so framed in their minds *abstract general ideas*, and annexed them to every common name they make use of?

15 Nor do I think them a whit more needful for the *enlargement of knowledge* than for *communication*. It is I know a point, much insisted on, that all knowledge and demonstration are about universal notions, to which I fully agree: but then it doth not appear to me that those notions are formed by *abstraction* in 40 the manner premised; *universality*, so far as I can comprehend not consisting in the absolute, positive nature or conception of

any thing, but in the relation it bears to the particulars signified or represented by it : by virtue whereof it is that things, names, or notions, being in their own nature *particular*, are rendered *universal*. Thus when I demonstrate any proposition concerning triangles, it is to be supposed that I have in view the universal idea of a triangle ; which ought not to be understood as if I could frame an idea of a triangle which was neither equilateral nor scalenon nor equicrural. But only that the particular triangle I consider, whether of this or that sort it matters not, doth o equally stand for and represent all rectilinear triangles whatsoever, and is in that sense *universal*. All which seems very plain and not to include any difficulty in it.

16 But, here it will be demanded, how we can know any proposition to be true of all particular triangles, except we have first seen it demonstrated of the abstract idea of a triangle which equally agrees to all ? For because a property may be demonstrated to agree to some one particular triangle, it will not thence follow that it equally belongs to any other triangle, which in all respects is not the same with it. For example, having demonstrated that the three angles of an isosceles rectangular triangle are equal to two right ones, I cannot therefore conclude this affection agrees to all other triangles, which have neither a right angle, nor two equal sides. It seems therefore that, to be certain this proposition is universally true, we must either make a particular demonstration for every particular triangle, which is impossible, or once for all demonstrate it of the *abstract idea of a triangle*, in which all the particulars do indifferently partake, and by which they are all equally represented. To which I answer, that though the idea I have in view whilst I make the demonstration, o be, for instance, that of an isosceles rectangular triangle, whose sides are of a determinate length, I may nevertheless be certain it extends to all other rectilinear triangles, of what sort or bigness soever. And that, because neither the right angle, nor the equality, nor determinate length of the sides, are at all concerned in the demonstration. It is true, the diagram I have in view includes all these particulars, but then there is not the least mention made of them in the proof of the proposition. It is not said, the three angles are equal to two right ones, because one of them is a right angle, or because the sides comprehending it are of the same length. Which sufficiently shews that the right angle might have been oblique, and the sides unequal, and for all that the *l 8 nor equicrural—(A) etc.*

demonstration have held good. And for this reason it is, that I conclude that to be true of any obliquangular or scalenon, which I had demonstrated of a particular right-angled, equicrural triangle ; and not because I demonstrated the proposition of the abstract idea of a triangle. And here it must be acknowledged that a man may consider a figure merely as triangular, without attending to the particular qualities of the angles, or relations of the sides. So far he may abstract : but this will never prove, that he can frame an abstract general inconsistent idea of a triangle. In like manner we may consider Peter so far forth as man, or so far forth as animal, without framing the forementioned abstract idea, either of man or of animal, in as much as all that is perceived is not considered.¹

17 It were an endless, as well as an useless thing, to trace the Schoolmen, those great masters of abstraction, through all the manifold inextricable labyrinths of error and dispute, which their doctrine of abstract natures and notions seems to have led them into. What bickerings and controversies, and what a learned dust have been raised about those matters, and what mighty advantage hath been from thence derived to mankind, are things 20 at this day too clearly known to need being insisted on. And it had been well if the ill effects of that doctrine were confined to those only who make the most avowed profession of it. When men consider the great pains, industry and parts, that have for so many ages been laid out on the cultivation and advancement of the sciences, and that notwithstanding all this, the far greater part of them remain full of darkness and uncertainty, and disputes that are like never to have an end, and even those that are thought to be supported by the most clear and cogent demonstrations, contain in them paradoxes which are perfectly irreconcilable to 30 the understandings of men, and that taking all together, a small portion of them doth supply any real benefit to mankind, otherwise than by being an innocent diversion and amusement. I say, the consideration of all this is apt to throw them into a despondency, and perfect contempt of all study. But this may perhaps cease, upon a view of the false principles that have obtained in the world, amongst all which there is none, methinks,

15 *And here it must be acknowledged . . . not considered (not in A).* 131 *small—(A) very small.*

¹ [The three sentences added in 1734 are not a late afterthought ; the same view is expressed in the first edition of the *Three Dialogues* (1713), below, p. 193.—Ed.]

hath a more wide influence over the thoughts of speculative men, than this of abstract general ideas.

18 .I come now to consider the source of this prevailing notion, and that seems to me to be language. And surely nothing of less extent than reason it self could have been the source of an opinion so universally received. The truth of this appears as from other reasons, so also from the plain confession of the ablest patrons of abstract ideas, who acknowledge that they are made in order to naming ; from which it is a clear consequence, that if there
 10 had been no such thing as speech or universal signs, there never had been any thought of abstraction. See B. 3 C. 6. Sect. 39 and elsewhere of the *Essay on Human Understanding*. Let us therefore examine the manner wherein words have contributed to the origin of that mistake. First then, 'tis thought that every name hath, or ought to have, one only precise and settled signification, which inclines men to think there are certain *abstract, determinate ideas*, which constitute the true and only immediate signification of each general name. And that it is by the mediation of these abstract ideas, that a general name comes to signify any particular
 20 thing. Whereas, in truth, there is no such thing as one precise and definite signification annexed to any general name, they all signifying indifferently a great number of particular ideas. All which doth evidently follow from what has been already said, and will clearly appear to any one by a little reflexion. To this it will be objected, that every name that has a definition, is thereby restrained to one certain signification. For example, a *triangle* is defined to be a *plane surface comprehended by three right lines* ; by which that name is limited to denote one certain idea and no other. To which I answer, that in the definition it is not said whether the
 30 surface be great or small, black or white, nor whether the sides are long or short, equal or unequal, nor with what angles they are inclined to each other ; in all which there may be great variety, and consequently there is no one settled idea which limits the signification of the word *triangle*. 'Tis one thing for to keep a name constantly to the same definition, and another to make it stand every where for the same idea : the one is necessary, the other useless and impracticable.

19 But to give a farther account how words came to produce

l 1 wide influence—(A) wide and extended sway. *l 2 this of abstract general ideas—(A) that we have been endeavouring to overthrow.* *l 12 Let us therefore—(A) But let us.* *l 17 which constitute—(A) that constitute.* *l 24 To this—(A) To this, I doubt not.* *l 30 white—(A) white, etc.*

the doctrine of abstract ideas, it must be observed that it is a received opinion, that language has no other end but the communicating our ideas, and that every significant name stands for an idea. This being so, and it being withal certain, that names, which yet are not thought altogether insignificant, do not always mark out particular conceivable ideas, it is straightway concluded that they stand for abstract notions. That there are many names in use amongst speculative men, which do not always suggest to others determinate particular ideas, is what no body will deny. And a little attention will discover, that it is ¹⁰ not necessary (even in the strictest reasonings) significant names, which stand for ideas should, every time they are used, excite in the understanding the ideas they are made to stand for: in reading and discoursing, names being for the most part used as letters are in *algebra*, in which though a particular quantity be marked by each letter, yet to proceed right it is not requisite that in every step each letter suggest to your thoughts, that particular quantity it was appointed to stand for.

²⁰ Besides, the communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed. ²⁰ There are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to, or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition; to which the former is in many cases barely subservient, and sometimes entirely omitted, when these can be obtained without it, as I think doth not infrequently happen in the familiar use of language. I entreat the reader to reflect with himself, and see if it doth not often happen either in hearing or reading a discourse, that the passions of fear, love, hatred, admiration, disdain, and the like arise, immediately in his mind upon the perception of certain words, without any ideas coming ³⁰ between. At first, indeed, the words might have occasioned ideas that were fit to produce those emotions; but, if I mistake not, it will be found that when language is once grown familiar, the hearing of the sounds or sight of the characters is oft immediately attended with those passions, which at first were wont to be produced by the intervention of ideas, that are now quite omitted. May we not, for example, be affected with the promise of a *good thing*, though we have not an idea of what it is? Or is not the being threatened with danger sufficient to excite a dread, though we think not of any particular evil likely to befall us, nor yet frame ⁴⁰

l 9 particular ideas—(A) particular ideas, or in truth any thing at all. l 27 often—(A) oft. l 29 and the like—(A) etc. l 32 fit—(A) fitting.

to our selves an idea of danger in abstract? If any one shall join ever so little reflection of his own to what has been said, I believe it will evidently appear to him, that general names are often used in the propriety of language without the speaker's designing them for marks of ideas in his own, which he would have them raise in the mind of the hearer. Even proper names themselves do not seem always spoken, with a design to bring into our view the ideas of those individuals that are supposed to be marked by them. For example, when a Schoolman tells me Aristotle hath said it, all I conceive he means by it, is to dispose me to embrace his opinion with the deference and submission which custom has annexed to that name. And this effect may be so instantly produced in the minds of those who are accustomed to resign their judgment to the authority of that philosopher, as it is impossible any idea either of his person, writings, or reputation should go before. Innumerable examples of this kind may be given, but why should I insist on those things, which every one's experience will, I doubt not, plentifully suggest unto him?

20 21 We have, I think, shewn the impossibility of *abstract ideas*. We have considered what has been said for them by their ablest patrons; and endeavoured to shew they are of no use for those ends, to which they are thought necessary. And lastly, we have traced them to the source from whence they flow, which appears to be language. It cannot be denied that words are of excellent use, in that by their means all that stock of knowledge which has been purchased by the joint labours of inquisitive men in all ages and nations, may be drawn into the view and made the possession of one single person. But at the same time it must be 30 owned that most parts of knowledge have been strangely perplexed and darkened by the abuse of words, and general ways of speech wherein they are delivered. Since therefore words are so apt to impose on the understanding, whatever ideas I consider, I shall endeavour to take them bare and naked into my view, keeping out of my thoughts, so far as I am able, those names which long

t 12 may be—(A) is oft. t 16 go before—(A) go before. So close and immediate a connexion may custom establish, betwixt the very word Aristotle and the motions of assent and reverence in the minds of some men. t 24 appears—(A) appears evidently. t 29 But at the same time it must be owned that . . . have been strangely—(A) But most parts of knowledge have been so strangely. t 32 delivered—(A) deliver'd, that it may almost be made a question whether language, has contributed more to the hindrance or advancement of the sciences. t 33 understanding—(A) understanding, I am resolv'd in my inquiries to make as little use of them as possibly I can.

and constant use hath so strictly united with them ; from which I may expect to derive the following advantages.

22 First, I shall be sure to get clear of all controversies purely verbal ; the springing up of which weeds in almost all the sciences has been a main hindrance to the growth of true and sound knowledge. Secondly, this seems to be a sure way to extricate my self out of that fine and subtle net of *abstract ideas*, which has so miserably perplexed and entangled the minds of men, and that with this peculiar circumstance, that by how much the finer and more curious was the wit of any man, by so much the deeper was he like to be ensnared, and faster hold therein. Thirdly, so long as I confine my thoughts to my own ideas divested of words, I do not see how I can easily be mistaken. The objects I consider, I clearly and adequately know.¹ I cannot be deceived in thinking I have an idea which I have not. It is not possible for me to imagine, that any of my own ideas are alike or unlike, that are not truly so. To discern the agreements or disagreements there are between my ideas, to see what ideas are included in any compound idea, and what not, there is nothing more requisite, than an attentive perception of what passes in my own understanding.

23 But the attainment of all these advantages doth presuppose an entire deliverance from the deception of words, which I dare hardly promise my self ; so difficult a thing it is to dissolve an union so early begun, and confirmed by so long a habit as that betwixt words and ideas. Which difficulty seems to have been very much increased by the doctrine of *abstraction*. For so long as men thought abstract ideas were annexed to their words, it doth not seem strange that they should use words for ideas : it being found an impracticable thing to lay aside the word, and retain the abstract idea in the mind, which in it self was perfectly inconceivable. This seems to me the principal cause, why those men who have so emphatically recommended to othcrs, the laying aside all use of words in their meditations, and contemplating their bare ideas, have yet failed to perform it themselves. Of late many have been very sensible of the absurd opinions and insignificant disputes, which grow out of the abuse of words.² And in order to remedy these evils they advise well, that we attend to the ideas signified, and draw off our attention from the

¹ [See Sect. 25 of Part I, and my note there.—Ed.] ² [E.g. Bacon, *Novum Organum*, Bk. I, aph. 43 ; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Pt. I, ch. 4 ; Locke, *Essay*, Bk. III, ch. x.—Ed.]

words which signify them. But how good soever this advice may be, they have given others, it is plain they could not have a due regard to it themselves, so long as they thought the only immediate use of words was to signify ideas, and that the immediate signification of every general name was a *determinate, abstract idea*.

24 But these being known to be mistakes, a man may with greater ease prevent his being imposed on by words. He that knows he has no other than particular ideas, will not puzzle 10 himself in vain to find out and conceive the abstract idea, annexed to any name. And he that knows names do not always stand for ideas, will spare himself the labour of looking for ideas, where there are none to be had. It were therefore to be wished that every one would use his utmost endeavours, to obtain a clear view of the ideas he would consider, separating from them all that dress and encumbrance of words which so much contribute to blind the judgment and divide the attention. In vain do we extend our view into the heavens, and pry into the entrails of the earth, in vain do we consult the writings of learned men, 20 and trace the dark footsteps of antiquity ; we need only draw the curtain of words, to behold the fairest tree of knowledge, whose fruit is excellent, and within the reach of our hand.

25 Unless we take care to clear the first principles of knowledge, from the embarrass and delusion of words, we may make infinite reasonings upon them to no purpose ; we may draw consequences from consequences, and be never the wiser. The farther we go, we shall only lose our selves the more irrecoverably, and be the deeper entangled in difficulties and mistakes. Whoever therefore designs to read the following sheets, I entreat him to 30 make my words the occasion of his own thinking, and endeavour to attain the same train of thoughts in reading, that I had in writing them. By this means it will be easy for him to discover the truth or falsity of what I say. He will be out of all danger of being deceived by my words, and I do not see how he can be led into an error by considering his own naked, undisguised ideas.

I 29 intreat him to—(A) do intreat him that he wou'd.

OF THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

PART I

1 It is evident to any one who takes a survey of the objects of human knowledge, that they are either ideas actually imprinted on the senses, or else such¹ as are perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind, or lastly ideas formed by help of memory and imagination, either compounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally perceived in the aforesaid ways. By sight I have the ideas of light and colours with their several degrees and variations. By touch I perceive, for example, hard and soft, heat and cold, motion and resistance, and of all these more and less either as to quantity or degree. Smelling¹⁰ furnishes me with odours; the palate with tastes, and hearing conveys sounds to the mind in all their variety of tone and composition. And as several of these are observed to accompany each other, they come to be marked by one name, and so to be reputed as one thing. Thus, for example, a certain colour, taste, smell, figure and consistence having been observed to go together, are accounted one distinct thing, signified by the name *apple*. Other collections of ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things; which, as they are pleasing or disagreeable, excite the passions of love, hatred, joy, grief, and so forth.²⁰

2 But besides all that endless variety of ideas or objects of knowledge, there is likewise something which knows or perceives them, and exercises divers operations, as willing, imagining, remembering about them.² This perceiving, active being is what

¹ 8 for example (B only). ¹ 9 resistance—(A) resistance, etc. ¹ 20 and so forth—(A) etc. ¹ 24 remembering—(A) remembering, etc.

¹ ['Such as.' This may mean either 'such ideas' or 'such objects.' Sects. 27, 135-40, and 142 prove that the latter is to be understood. Berkeley always means by 'idea' a sensory object. In this opening sentence the vagueness, doubtless deliberate, does not matter.—Ed.] ² [The distinction of the mind from its 'ideas,' etc., is clearly stated in *Three Dialogues*, below p. 233f.—Ed.]

I call *mind*, *spirit*, *soul* or *my self*. By which words I do not denote any one of my ideas, but a thing entirely distinct from them, wherein they exist, or, which is the same thing, whereby they are perceived ; for the existence of an idea consists in being perceived.

3 That neither our thoughts, nor passions, nor ideas formed by the imagination, exist without the mind, is what every body will allow. And it seems no less evident that the various sensations or ideas imprinted on the sense, however blended or combined together (that is, whatever objects they compose) cannot exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving them. I think an intuitive knowledge may be obtained of this, by any one that shall attend to what is meant by the term *exist* when applied to sensible things. The table I write on, I say, exists, that is, I see and feel it ; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed, meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it. There was an odour, that is, it was smelled ; there was a sound, that is to say, it was heard ; a colour or figure, and it was perceived by sight or touch. This is all that I can understand by these and the like expressions. For 20 as to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived, that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their *esse* is *percipi*, nor is it possible they should have any existence, out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them.

4 It is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and in a word all sensible objects have an existence natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding. But with how great an assurance and acquiescence soever this principle may be entertained in the 30 world ; yet whoever shall find in his heart to call it in question, may, if I mistake not, perceive it to involve a manifest contradiction. For what are the forementioned objects but the things we perceive by sense, and what do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations ; and is it not plainly repugnant that any one of these or any combination of them should exist unperceived ?

5 If we thoroughly examine this tenet, it will, perhaps, be found at bottom to depend on the doctrine of *abstract ideas*. For can there be a nicer strain of abstraction than to distinguish the existence of sensible objects from their being perceived, so as to 40 conceive them existing unperceived ? Light and colours, heat

l 7 it seems—(A) to me it is. l 21 seems—(A) is to me. l 32 For what are—(A) For what I pray you are.

and cold, extension and figures, in a word the things we see and feel, what are they but so many sensations, notions, ideas or impressions on the sense ; and is it possible to separate, even in thought, any of these from perception ? For my part I might as easily divide a thing from it self. I may indeed divide in my thoughts or conceive apart from each other those things which, perhaps, I never perceived by sense so divided. Thus I imagine the trunk of a human body without the limbs, or conceive the smell of a rose without thinking on the rose it self. So far I will not deny I can abstract, if that may properly be called *abstraction*, ¹⁰ which extends only to the conceiving separately such objects, as it is possible may really exist or be actually perceived asunder. But my conceiving or imagining power does not extend beyond the possibility of real existence or perception. Hence as it is impossible for me to see or feel anything without an actual sensation of that thing, so is it impossible for me to conceive in my thoughts any sensible thing or object distinct from the sensation or perception of it.

6 Some truths there are so near and obvious to the mind, that a man need only open his eyes to see them. Such I take this ²⁰ important one to be, to wit, that all the choir of heaven and furniture of the earth, in a word all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any subsistence without a mind, that their being is to be perceived or known ; that consequently so long as they are not actually perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind or that of any other created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, or else subsist in the mind of some eternal spirit : it being perfectly unintelligible and involving all the absurdity of abstraction, to attribute to any single part of them an existence independent of a spirit. To be convinced of ³⁰ which, the reader need only reflect and try to separate in his own thoughts the being of a sensible thing from its being perceived.

7 From what has been said, it follows, there is not any other substance than *spirit*, or that which perceives. But for the fuller proof of this point, let it be considered, the sensible qualities are

l 18 of it—(A) of it. In truth the object and the sensation are the same thing, and cannot therefore be abstracted from each other. l 24 their being—(A) their esse, l 30 To be convinced . . . being perceived—(A) To make this appear with all the light and evidence of an axiom, it seems sufficient if I can but awaken the reflexion of the reader, that he may take an impartial view of his own meaning, and turn his thoughts upon the subject it self, free and disengaged from all embarrass of words and prepossession in favour of received mistakes. l 33 it follows—(A) 'tis evident. l 35 proof—(A) demonstration.

colour, figure, motion, smell, taste, and such like, that is, the ideas perceived by sense. Now for an idea to exist in an unperceiving thing, is a manifest contradiction ; for to have an idea is all one as to perceive : that therefore wherein colour, figure, and the like qualities exist, must perceive them ; hence it is clear there can be no unthinking substance or *substratum* of those ideas. ✓

8 But say you, though the ideas themselves do not exist without the mind, yet there may be things like them whereof they are copies or resemblances, which things exist without the mind, in an unthinking substance. I answer, an idea can be like nothing but an idea ; a colour or figure can be like nothing but another colour or figure. If we look but ever so little into our thoughts, we shall find it impossible for us to conceive a likeness except only between our ideas. Again, I ask whether those supposed originals or external things, of which our ideas are the pictures or representations, be themselves perceptible or no ? If they are, then they are ideas, and we have gained our point ; but if you say they are not, I appeal to anyone whether it be sense, to assert a colour is like something which is invisible ; hard or soft, like something which is intangible ; and so of the rest.

9 Some there are who make a distinction betwixt *primary* and *secondary* qualities¹ : by the former, they mean extension, figure, motion, rest, solidity or impenetrability and number : by the latter they denote all other sensible qualities, as colours, sounds, tastes, and so forth. The ideas we have of these they acknowledge not to be the resemblances of any thing existing without the mind or unperceived ; but they will have our ideas of the primary qualities to be patterns or images of things which exist without the mind, in an unthinking substance which they call *matter*. By matter therefore we are to understand an inert, sensless substance.

^{l 1} and such like, that is—(A) etc., i.e. ^{l 4} and the like qualities—(A) etc.

^{l 12} ever—(A) never. ^{l 25} and so forth—(A) etc.

¹ [The most lately Locke, *Essay*, Bk. II, ch. viii. On the history of the distinction of qualities see Sir Wm. Hamilton, *Works of Thomas Reid*, Note D (6th ed., pp. 825-75). Berkeley's argument against the distinction is much expanded in the first of the *Three Dialogues*. So far as his argument rests on the equal relativity of the two kinds of qualities it may have been derived from Bayle (*Dictionnaire Historique*, art. 'Zenon,' Note G; *op. art.* 'Pyrrhon,' Note B, where the discussion is vaguer). So far as it rests on the impossibility of abstracting either kind from the other in imagination, it seems to be his own. These two lines, however, constitute an *argumentum ad hominem* ; his case rests on 'esse est percipi' (applying indifferently to all sensory qualities), as is evident from Sect. 9 and from the reference in Sect. 15 to 'the arguments foregoing.'—Ed.]

in which extension, figure, and motion, do actually subsist. But it is evident from what we have already shewn, that extension, figure and motion are only ideas existing in the mind, and that an idea can be like nothing but another idea, and that consequently neither they nor their archetypes can exist in an unperceiving substance. Hence it is plain, that the very notion of what is called matter or corporeal substance, involves a contradiction in it.

310 They who assert that figure, motion, and the rest of the primary or original qualities do exist without the mind, in unthinking substances, do at the same time acknowledge that colours, ¹⁰ sounds, heat, cold, and such like secondary qualities, do not, which they tell us are sensations existing in the mind alone, that depend on and are occasioned by the different size, texture and motion of the minute particles of matter. This they take for an undoubted truth, which they can demonstrate beyond all exception. Now if it be certain, that those original qualities are inseparably united with the other sensible qualities, and not, even in thought, capable of being abstracted from them, it plainly follows that they exist only in the mind. But I desire any one to reflect and try, whether he can by any abstraction of thought, ²⁰ conceive the extension and motion of a body, without all other sensible qualities. For my own part, I see evidently that it is not in my power to frame an idea of a body extended and moved, but I must withal give it some colour or other sensible quality which is acknowledged to exist only in the mind. In short, extension, figure, and motion, abstracted from all other qualities, are inconceivable. Where therefore the other sensible qualities are, there must these be also, to wit, in the mind and no where else. 3/

11 Again, great and small, swift and slow, are allowed to exist ³⁰ no where without the mind, being entirely relative, and changing as the frame or position of the organs of sense varies. The extension therefore which exists without the mind, is neither great nor small, the motion neither swift nor slow, that is, they are nothing at all. But say you, they are extension in general, and motion in general : thus we see how much the tenet of extended,

l 1 motion—(A) motion, etc. l 7 in it—(A) in it. Insomuch that I shou'd not think it necessary to spend more time in exposing it's absurdity. But because the tenent of the existence of matter seems to have taken so deep a root in the minds of philosophers, and draws after it so many ill consequences, I chuse rather to be thought prolix and tedious, than omit any thing that might conduce to the full discovery and extirpation of that prejudice. l 11 and such like secondary qualities—(A) etc. l 13 texture and motion—(A) texture, motion, etc. l 23 moved—(A) moving.

moveable substances existing without the mind, depends on that strange doctrine of *abstract ideas*. And here I cannot but remark, how nearly the vague and indeterminate description of matter or corporeal substance, which the modern philosophers are run into by their own principles, resembles that antiquated and so much ridiculed notion of *materia prima*, to be met with in Aristotle and his followers. Without extension solidity cannot be conceived ; since therefore it has been shewn that extension exists not in an unthinking substance, the same must also be true of solidity.

12 That number is entirely the creature of the mind, even though the other qualities be allowed to exist without, will be evident to whoever considers, that the same thing bears a different denomination of number, as the mind views it with different respects. Thus, the same extension is one or three or thirty six, according as the mind considers it with reference to a yard, a foot, or an inch. Number is so visibly relative, and dependent on men's understanding, that it is strange to think how any one should give it an absolute existence without the mind. We say one book, 20 one page, one line ; all these are equally units, though some contain several of the others. And in each instance it is plain, the unit relates to some particular combination of ideas arbitrarily put together by the mind.

13 Unity I know some will have to be a simple or uncompounded idea, accompanying all other ideas into the mind.¹ That I have any such idea answering the word *unity*, I do not find ; and if I had, methinks I could not miss finding it ; on the contrary it should be the most familiar to my understanding, since it is said to accompany all other ideas, and to be perceived by all the ways 30 of sensation and reflexion. To say no more, it is an *abstract idea*.

14 I shall farther add, that after the same manner, as modern philosophers prove certain sensible qualities to have no existence in matter, or without the mind, the same thing may be likewise proved of all other sensible qualities whatsoever. Thus, for instance, it is said that heat and cold are affections only of the mind, and not at all patterns of real beings, existing in the corporeal substances which excite them, for that the same body which appears cold to one hand, seems warm to another. Now why may we not as well argue that figure and extension are not 40 patterns or resemblances of qualities existing in matter, because

¹ 20 *one line*—(A) *one line*, etc. 132 *certain sensible qualities*—(A) *colours, tastes, etc.*

¹ [Locke, *Essay*, II vii 7 ; xvi 1.—Ed.]

to the same eye at different stations, or eyes of a different texture at the same station, they appear various, and cannot therefore be the images of any thing settled and determinate without the mind? Again, it is proved that sweetness is not really in the savor thing, because the thing remaining unaltered the sweetness is changed into bitter, as in case of a fever or otherwise vitiated palate. Is it not as reasonable to say, that motion is not without the mind, since if the succession of ideas in the mind become swifter, the motion, it is acknowledged, shall appear slower without any alteration in any external object.

10

15 In short, let anyone consider those arguments, which are thought manifestly to prove that colours and tastes exist only in the mind, and he shall find they may with equal force, be brought to prove the same thing of extension, figure, and motion. Though it must be confessed this method of arguing doth not so much prove that there is no extension or colour in an outward object, as that we do not know by sense which is the true extension or colour of the object. But the arguments foregoing plainly shew it to be impossible that any colour or extension at all, or other sensible quality whatsoever, should exist in an unthinking subject ²⁰ without the mind, or in truth, that there should be any such thing as an outward object.

16 But let us examine a little the received opinion. It is said extension is a mode or accident of matter, and that matter is the *substratum* that supports it. Now I desire that you would explain what is meant by matter's *supporting extension*: say you, I have no idea of matter, and therefore cannot explain it. I answer, though you have no positive, yet if you have any meaning at all, you must at least have a relative idea of matter; though you know not what it is, yet you must be supposed to know what ³⁰ relation it bears to accidents, and what is meant by its supporting them. It is evident *support* cannot here be taken in its usual or literal sense, as when we say that pillars support a building: in what sense therefore must it be taken?

17 If we inquire into what the most accurate philosophers declare themselves to mean by *material substance*; we shall find them acknowledge, they have no other meaning annexed to those sounds, but the idea of being in general, together with the relative

l 10 alteration in any external object—(A) *external alteration*. *l 12 colours and tastes*—(Q) *colours, tastes, etc.* *l 16 extension or colour*—(A) *extension, colour, etc.* *l 25 explain*—(A) *explain to me.* *l 34 taken?*—(A) *taken?* *For my part I am not able to discover any sense at all that can be applicable to it.*

notion of its supporting accidents.¹ The general idea of being appeareth to me the most abstract and incomprehensible of all other ; and as for its supporting accidents, this, as we have just now observed, cannot be understood in the common sense of those words ; it must therefore be taken in some other sense, but what that is they do not explain. So that when I consider the two parts or branches which make the signification of the words *material substance*, I am convinced there is no distinct meaning annexed to them. But why should we trouble ourselves any farther, in discussing this material *substratum* or support of figure and motion, and other sensible qualities ? Does it not suppose they have an existence without the mind ? And is not this a direct repugnancy, and altogether inconceivable ?

18 But though it were possible that solid, figured, moveable substances may exist without the mind, corresponding to the ideas we have of bodies, yet how is it possible for us to know this ? Either we must know it by sense, or by reason. As for our senses, by them we have the knowledge only of our sensations, ideas, or those things that are immediately perceived by sense, call them 20 what you will : but they do not inform us that things exist without the mind, or unpereceived, like to those which are perceived. This the materialists themselves acknowledge. It remains therefore that if we have any knowledge at all of external things, it must be by reason, inferring their existence from what is immediately perceived by sense. But what reason can induce us to believe the existence of bodies without the mind, from what we perceive, since the very patrons of matter themselves do not pretend, there is any necessary connexion betwixt them and our ideas ? I say it is granted on all hands² (and what happens in dreams, phrenses, and 30 the like, puts it beyond dispute) that it is possible we might be affected with all the ideas we have now, though no bodies existed without, resembling them. Hence it is evident the supposition of external bodies is not necessary for the producing our ideas : since it is granted they are produced sometimes, and might possibly be produced always in the same order we see them in at present, without their concurrence.

111 and other sensible qualities—(A) etc. 125 But what reason—(A) But I do not see what reason. 131 though no bodies existed—(A) though there were no bodies existing.

¹ [E.g. Locke, *op. cit.*, II xiii 19 ; xxiii 2 ; I iv 18.—Ed.] ² [E.g. Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*, IV^e partie ; Malebranche, *Entretiens sur la Métaphysique*, I v. But not Locke (IV xi).—Ed.]

19 But though we might possibly have all our sensations without them, yet perhaps it may be thought easier to conceive and explain the manner of their production, by supposing external bodies in their likeness rather than otherwise ; and so it might be at least probable there are such things as bodies that excite their ideas in our minds. But neither can this be said ; for though we give the materialists their external bodies, they by their own confession are never the nearer knowing how our ideas are produced : since they own themselves unable to comprehend in what manner body can act upon spirit, or how it is possible it ¹⁰ should imprint any idea in the mind. Hence it is evident the production of ideas or sensations in our minds, can be no reason why we should suppose matter or corporal substances, since that is acknowledged to remain equally inexplicable with, or without this supposition. If therefore it were possible for bodies to exist without the mind, yet to hold they do so, must needs be a very precarious opinion ; since it is to suppose, without any reason at all, that God has created innumerable beings that are entirely useless, and serve to no manner of purpose.

20 In short, if there were external bodies, it is impossible we ²⁰ should ever come to know it ; and if there were not, we might have the very same reasons to think there were that we have now. Suppose, what no one can deny possible, an intelligence, without the help of external bodies, to be affected with the same train of sensations or ideas that you are, imprinted in the same order and with like vividness in his mind. I ask whether that intelligence hath not all the reason to believe the existence of corporeal substances, represented by his ideas, and exciting them in his mind, that you can possibly have for believing the same thing ? Of this there can be no question ; which one consideration is enough to ³⁰ make any reasonable person suspect the strength of whatever arguments he may think himself to have, for the existence of bodies without the mind.

21 Were it necessary to add any farther proof against the existence of matter, after what has been said, I could instance several of those errors and difficulties (not to mention impieties) which have sprung from that tenet. It has occasioned numberless controversies and disputes in philosophy, and not a few of far greater moment in religion. But I shall not enter into the detail of them in this place, as well because I think, arguments *à posteriori* ⁴⁰ are unnecessary for confirming what has been, if I mistake not, *l 20 if—(A) tho'. l 30 is enough—(A) were enough.*

sufficiently demonstrated *à priori*, as because I shall hereafter find occasion to say somewhat of them.¹

22 I am afraid I have given cause to think me needlessly prolix in handling this subject. For to what purpose is it to dilate on that which may be demonstrated with the utmost evidence in a line or two, to anyone that is capable of the least reflexion? It is but looking into your own thoughts, and so trying whether you can conceive it possible for a sound, or figure, or motion, or colour, to exist without the mind, or unperceived. This easy trial may make you see, that what you contend for, is a downright contradiction. Inasmuch that I am content to put the whole upon this issue; if you can but conceive it possible for one extended moveable substance, or in general, for any one idea or any thing like an idea, to exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving it, I shall readily give up the cause: And as for all that *compages* of external bodies which you contend for, I shall grant you its existence, though you cannot either give me any reason why you believe it exists, or assign any use to it when it is supposed to exist. I say, the bare possibility of your opinion's being true, shall pass for an argument that it is so.

23 But say you, surely there is nothing easier than to imagine trees, for instance, in a park, or books existing in a closet, and no body by to perceive them. I answer, you may so, there is no difficulty in it: but what is all this, I beseech you, more than framing in your mind certain ideas which you call *books* and *trees*, and at the same time omitting to frame the idea of any one that may perceive them? But do not you your self perceive or think of them all the while? This therefore is nothing to the purpose: it only shows you have the power of imagining or forming ideas in your mind; but it doth not shew that you can conceive it possible, the objects of your thought may exist without the mind: to make out this, it is necessary that you conceive them existing unconceived or unthought of, which is a manifest repugnancy. When we do our utmost to conceive the existence of external bodies, we are all the while only contemplating our own ideas. But the mind taking no notice of itself, is deluded to think it can and doth conceive bodies existing unthought of or without the mind; though at the same time they are apprehended by or exist

l 2 say—(A) speak. l 3 think me—(A) think I am. l 9 may make—(A) may perhaps make. l 15 bodies which you—(A) bodies you. l 21 than to imagine—(A) than for me to imagine.

¹ [Apparently in Sects. 85ff.—Ed.]

in it self. A little attention will discover to any one the truth and evidence of what is here said, and make it unnecessary to insist on any other proofs against the existence of material substance.

24 It is very obvious, upon the least inquiry into our own thoughts, to know whether it be possible for us to understand what is meant, by the *absolute existence of sensible objects in themselves, or without the mind*. To me it is evident those words mark out either a direct contradiction, or else nothing at all. And to convince others of this, I know no readier or fairer way, than to entreat they would calmly attend to their own thoughts : and if by this ¹⁰ attention, the emptiness or repugnancy of those expressions does appear, surely nothing more is requisite for their conviction. It is on this therefore that I insist, to wit, that the absolute existence of unthinking things are words without a meaning, or which include a contradiction. This is what I repeat and inculcate, and earnestly recommend to the attentive thoughts of the reader.

25 All our ideas, sensations, or the things which we perceive, by whatsoe'er names ¹ they may be distinguished, are visibly inactive; there is nothing of power or agency included in them. So that one idea or object of thought cannot produce, or make any ²⁰ alteration in another. To be satisfied of the truth of this, there is nothing else requisite but a bare observation of our ideas. For since they and every part of them exist only in the mind, it follows that there is nothing in them but what is perceived.¹ But whoever shall attend to his ideas, whether of sense or reflexion, will not perceive in them any power or activity ; there is therefore no such thing contained in them. A little attention will discover to us that

I 4. (A begins) Cou'd men but forbear to amuse themselves with words, we shou'd I believe, soon come to an agreement in this point. It is very. . . . I 12 more is—(A) is more. I 17 sensations, or—(A) sensations, notions or

¹ [This was a modern axiom. *Cp.* Sect. 87, Sect. 22 of Berkeley's *Introduction*, and Malebranche, *Recherche de la Vérité*, I xiv 2, 'Toutes les choses que nous voyons immédiatement sont toujours telles que nous les voyons' ; also Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, I iv 2, 'Since all actions and sensations of the mind are known to us by consciousness, they must necessarily appear in every particular what they are, and be what they appear.' That causal power is not a datum of the external sense had already been asserted by Malebranche and Locke as a fact of observation ; Berkeley adds that 'ideas,' existing only in being perceived, are necessarily inert, the regular connection among them being that of sign and thing signified (Sect. 65). *Cp.* his *Siris*, Sect. 292, 'Natural phaenomena are only natural appearances. They are, therefore, such as we see and perceive them. Their real and objective natures are, therefore, the same ; passive without any thing active, fluent and changing without any thing permanent in them.'—Ed.]

the very being of an idea implies passiveness and inertness in it, insomuch that it is impossible for an idea to do any thing, or, strictly speaking, to be the cause of any thing: neither can it be the resemblance or pattern of any active being, as is evident from *Sect. 8.* Whence it plainly follows that extension, figure and motion, cannot be the cause of our sensations. To say therefore, that these are the effects of powers resulting from the configuration, number, motion, and size of corpuscles, must certainly be false.

26 We perceive a continual succession of ideas, some are anew excited, others are changed or totally disappear. There is therefore some cause of these ideas whereon they depend, and which produces and changes them. That this cause cannot be any quality or idea or combination of ideas, is clear from the preceding section. It must therefore be a substance; but it has been shewn that there is no corporal or material substance: [it remains therefore that the cause of ideas is an incorporeal active substance or spirit.]

27 A spirit is one simple, undivided, active being: as it perceives ideas, it is called the *understanding*, and as it produces or otherwise operates about them, it is called the *will*. Hence there can be no idea formed of a soul or spirit: for all ideas whatever, being passive and inert, *vide Sect. 25*, they cannot represent unto us, by way of image or likeness, that which acts. A little attention will make it plain to any one, that to have an idea which shall be like that active principle of motion and change of ideas, is absolutely impossible. Such is the nature of *spirit* or that which acts, that it cannot be of it self perceived, but only by the effects which it produceth.¹ If any man shall doubt of the truth of what is here delivered, let him but reflect and try if he can frame the idea of any power or active being; and whether he hath ideas of two principal powers, marked by the names *will* and *understanding*, distinct from each other as well as from a third idea of substance or being in general, with a relative notion of its supporting or being the subject of the aforesaid powers, which is signified by the name *soul* or *spirit*. This is what some hold; but so far as I can see, the words *will*, *soul*, *spirit*, do not stand for different ideas, or in

18 motion and size—(A) motion, size, etc. 136 will, soul—(A) will, understanding, mind, soul.

¹ [Although not apprehensible apart from its actions and passions, it is apprehended in these, and as not identical with these. In the *Three Dialogues* (below, p. 232) he says explicitly, 'My own mind and my own ideas I have an immediate knowledge of.'—Ed.]

truth, for any idea at all, but for something which is very different from ideas, and which being an agent cannot be like unto, or represented by, any idea whatsoever. Though it must be owned at the same time, that we have some notion¹ of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind, such as willing, loving, hating, in as much as we know or understand the meaning of those words.

28 I find I can excite ideas in my mind at pleasure, and vary and shift the scene as oft as I think fit. It is no more than willing, and straightway this or that idea arises in my fancy: and by 10 the same power it is obliterated, and makes way for another. This making and unmaking of ideas doth very properly denominate the mind active. Thus much is certain, and grows ¹ on experience: but when we talk of unthinking agents, or exciting ideas exclusive of volition, we only amuse our selves with words.

29 But whatever power I may have over my own thoughts, I find the ideas actually perceived by sense have not a like dependence on my will. When in broad day-light I open my eyes, it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or no, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my ²⁰ view; and so likewise as to the hearing and other senses, the ideas imprinted on them are not creatures of my will. There is therefore some other will or spirit that produces them.

30 The ideas of sense are more strong, lively, and distinct than those of the imagination; they have likewise a steadiness, order, and coherence, and are not excited at random, as those which are the effects of human wills often are, but in a regular train or series, the admirable connexion whereof sufficiently testifies the wisdom and benevolence of its Author. Now the set rules or established methods, wherein the mind we depend on excites in ³⁰ us the ideas of sense, are called the *Laws of Nature*: and these we learn by experience, which teaches us that such and such ideas

13 *Though . . . those words (B only).*

¹ [In introducing the term 'notion' for the mental as object in the Second Edition here and in Sects. 89, 140, and 142 (and correspondingly in the 1734 edition of the *Three Dialogues*, below, p. 233), Berkeley was returning to his original intention (see Sect. 140, MS. variant). There is no change of doctrine; the corporeal as object had been called 'idea,' and the mental as object is now given a name (the generic name for both is 'thing,' Sects. 39 and 89). Where this distinction is not in view, 'notion' (also 'notional') is used either in its vague sense, or in the sense in which Locke distinguishes it from 'idea'—as an object framed by the mind and existing 'more in the thoughts of men than in the reality of things' (*Essay*, II xxii 2).—Ed.]

are attended with such and such other ideas, in the ordinary course of things.

31 This gives us a sort of foresight, which enables us to regulate our actions for the benefit of life. And without this we should be eternally at a loss : we could not know how to act any thing that might procure us the least pleasure, or remove the least pain of sense. That food nourishes, sleep refreshes, and fire warms us ; that to sow in the seed-time is the way to reap in the harvest, and, in general, that to obtain such or such ends, such or such means are conducive, all this we know, not by discovering any necessary connexion between our ideas, but only by the observation of the settled laws of Nature, without which we should be all in uncertainty and confusion, and a grown man no more know how to manage himself in the affairs of life, than an infant just born.

32 And yet this consistent uniform working, which so evidently displays the goodness and wisdom of that governing spirit whose will constitutes the Laws of Nature, is so far from leading our thoughts to him, that it rather sends them a wandering after second causes. For when we perceive certain ideas of sense constantly followed by other ideas, and we know this is not of our doing, we forthwith attribute power and agency to the ideas themselves, and make one the cause of another, than which nothing can be more absurd and unintelligible. Thus, for example, having observed that when we perceive by sight a certain round luminous figure, we at the same time perceive by touch the idea or sensation called *heat*, we do from thence conclude the sun to be the cause of heat. And in like manner perceiving the motion and collision of bodies to be attended with sound, we are inclined to think the latter an effect of the former.

33 The ideas imprinted on the senses by the Author of Nature are called *real things* : and those excited in the imagination being less regular, vivid and constant, are more properly termed *ideas*, or *images of things*, which they copy and represent. But then our sensations, be they never so vivid and distinct, are nevertheless *ideas*, that is, they exist in the mind, or are perceived by it, as truly as the ideas of its own framing. The ideas of sense are allowed to have more reality in them, that is, to be more strong, orderly, and coherent than the creatures of the mind ; but this is no argument that they exist without the mind. They are also less dependent on the spirit, or thinking substance which perceives them, in that they are excited by the will of another and more powerful spirit : yet still they are *ideas*, and certainly no *idea*,

whether faint or strong, can exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving it.

34 Before we proceed any farther, it is necessary to spend some time in answering objections which may probably be made against the principles hitherto laid down.¹ In doing of which, if I seem too prolix to those of quick apprehensions, I hope it may be pardoned, since all men do not equally apprehend things of this nature; and I am willing to be understood by every one. First then, it will be objected that by the foregoing principles, all that is real and substantial in Nature is banished out of the world: and instead therof a chimerical scheme of ideas takes place. All things that exist, exist only in the mind, that is, they are purely notional. What therefore becomes of the sun, moon, and stars? What must we think of houses, rivers, mountains, trees, stones; nay, even of our own bodies? Are all these but so many chimeras and illusions on the fancy? To all which, and whatever else of the same sort may be objected, I answer, that by the principles premised, we are not deprived of any one thing in Nature. Whatever we see, feel, hear, or any wise conceive or understand, remains as secure as ever, and is as real as ever. There is a *rerum natura*, and the distinction between realities and chimeras retains its full force. This is evident from Sect. 29, 30, and 33, where we have shewn what is meant by *real things* in opposition to *chimeras*, or ideas of our own framing; but then they both equally exist in the mind, and in that sense are alike *ideas*.

35 I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend, either by sense or reflexion. That the things I see with mine eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence we deny, is that which philosophers call matter or corporeal substance. And in doing of this, there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it. The atheist indeed will want the colour of an empty name to support his impiety; and the philosophers may possibly find, they have lost a great handle for trifling and disputation.

l 3 necessary to spend—(A) necessary we spend. l 5 principles—(A) principles we have. l 6 hope it may be pardoned—(A) desire I may be excused. l 28 mine—(A) my. l 35 disputation—(A) disputation. But that's all the harm that I can see done.

¹ [Cp. Philos. *Commentaries*, entry 312, '4 principles whereby to answer objections viz.—1. Bodies do really exist tho not perceiv'd by us. 2. There is a law or course of Nature. 3. Language and knowledge are all about ideas, words stand for nothing else. 4. Nothing can be a proof against one side of a contradiction that bears equally hard upon the other.'—Ed.]

36 If any man thinks this detracts from the existence or reality of things, he is very far from understanding what hath been premised in the plainest terms I could think of. Take here an abstract of what has been said. There are spiritual substances, minds, or human souls, which will or excite ideas in themselves at pleasure : but these are faint, weak, and unsteady in respect of others they perceive by sense, which being impressed upon them according to certain rules or laws of Nature, speak themselves the effects of a mind more powerful and wise than human spirits.

10 These latter are said to have more *reality* in them than the former : by which is meant that they are more affecting, orderly, and distinct, and that they are not fictions of the mind perceiving them. And in this sense, the sun that I see by day is the real sun, and that which I imagine by night is the idea of the former. In the sense here given of *reality*, it is evident that every vegetable, star, mineral, and in general each part of the mundane system, is as much a *real being* by our principles as by any other. Whether others mean any thing by the term *reality* different from what I do, I entreat them to look into their own thoughts and see.

20 37 It will be urged that thus much at least is true, to wit, that we take away all corporeal substances. To this my answer is, that if the word *substance* be taken in the vulgar sense, for a combination of sensible qualities, such as extension, solidity, weight, and the like ; this we cannot be accused of taking away. But if it be taken in a philosophic sense, for the support of accidents or qualities without the mind : then indeed I acknowledge that we take it away, if one may be said to take away that which never had any existence, not even in the imagination.

38 But, say you, it sounds very harsh to say we eat and drink ideas, and are clothed with ideas. I acknowledge it does so, the word *idea* not being used in common discourse to signify the several combinations of sensible qualities, which are called *things* : and it is certain that any expression which varies from the familiar use of language, will seem harsh and ridiculous. But this doth not concern the truth of the proposition, which in other words is no more than to say, we are fed and clothed with those things which we perceive immediately by our senses. The hardness or softness, the colour, taste, warmth, figure, and such like qualities, which combined together constitute the several sorts of victuals and

l 1 this detracts—(A) we detract. l 24 and the like—(A) etc. l 29 But, say you—(A) But, after all, say you. l 36 than to say—(A) than this, viz. l 38 and such like qualities—(A) etc.

apparel, have been shewn to exist only in the mind that perceives them ; and this is all that is meant by calling them *ideas* ; which word, if it was as ordinarily used as *thing*, would sound no harsher nor more ridiculous than it. I am not for disputing about the propriety, but the truth of the expression. If therefore you agree with me that we eat and drink, and are clad with the immediate objects of sense which cannot exist unperceived or without the mind : I shall readily grant it is more proper or conformable to custom, that they should be called things rather than ideas.

39 If it be demanded why I make use of the word *idea*, and ¹⁰ do not rather in compliance with custom call them *things*. I answer, I do it for two reasons : first, because the term *thing*, in contradistinction to *idea*, is generally supposed to denote somewhat existing without the mind : secondly, because *thing* hath a more comprehensive signification than *idea*, including spirits or thinking things as well as ideas. Since therefore the objects of sense exist only in the mind, and are withal thoughtless and inactive, I chose to mark them by the word *idea*, which implies those properties.

40 But say what we can, some one perhaps may be apt to reply, he will still believe his senses, and never suffer any arguments, ²⁰ how plausible soever, to prevail over the certainty of them. Be it so, assert the evidence of sense as high as you please, we are willing to do the same. That what I see, hear and feel doth exist, that is to say, is perceived by me, I no more doubt than I do of my own being. But I do not see how the testimony of sense can be alleged, as a proof for the existence of any thing, which is not perceived by sense. We are not for having any man turn *sceptic*,¹ and disbelieve his senses ; on the contrary we give them all the stress and assurance imaginable ; nor are there any principles more opposite to scepticism, than those we have laid down, as ³⁰ shall be hereafter clearly shewn.

41 Secondly, it will be objected that there is a great difference betwixt real fire, for instance, and the idea of fire, betwixt dreaming or imagining one's self burnt, and actually being so : this and the like may be urged in opposition to our tenets. To all which the answer is evident from what hath been already said, and I shall only add in this place, that if real fire be very different from

¹ 24 that is to say—(A) i.e. 134 being so—(A) being so : if you suspect it to be only the idea of fire which you see, do but put your hand into it, and you'll be convinced with a witness. This . . .

¹ [In this work and the *Three Dialogues* 'scepticism' always means doubt or denial of the 'reality' of the immediate objects of sense.—Ed.]

the idea of fire, so also is the real pain that it occasions, very different from the idea of the same pain: and yet no body will pretend that real pain either is, or can possibly be, in an unperceiving thing or without the mind, any more than its Idea.

42. Thirdly, it will be objected that we see things actually without or at a distance from us, and which consequently do not exist in the mind, it being absurd that those things which are seen at the distance of several miles, should be as near to us as our own thoughts. In answer to this, I desire it may be considered, that in 10 a dream we do oft perceive things as existing at a great distance off, and yet for all that, those things are acknowledged to have their existence only in the mind.

43. But for the fuller clearing of this point, it may be worth while to consider, how it is that we perceive distance and things placed at a distance by sight. For that we should in truth see external space, and bodies actually existing in it, some nearer, others farther off, seems to carry with it some opposition to what hath been said, of their existing no where without the mind. The consideration of this difficulty it was, that gave birth to my 20 *Essay towards a new Theory of Vision*, which was published not long sinc.¹ Wherein it is shewn that *distance* or outness is neither immediately of it self perceived by sight, nor yet apprehended or judged of by lines and angles, or any thing that hath a necessary connexion with it: but that it is only suggested to our thoughts, by certain visible ideas and sensations attending vision, which in their own nature have no manner of similitude or relation, either with distance, or things placed at a distance. But by a connexion taught us by experience, they come to signify and suggest them to us, after the same manner that words of any language suggest the 30 ideas they are made to stand for. Insomuch that a man born blind, and afterwards made to see, would not, at first sight, think the things he saw, to be without his mind, or at any distance from him. See *Sect. 41* of the forementioned treatise.

44. The ideas of sight and touch make two species, entirely distinct and heterogeneous. The former are marks and prognostics of the latter. That the proper objects of sight neither exist without the mind, nor are the images of external things, was shewn even in that treatise. Though throughout the same, the contrary be sup-

¹ [That is, Berkeley's immaterialism preceded his theory of vision, as is clear from the *Philos. Commentaries* as now edited. Fraser put into currency the view that the theory of vision was 'the seminal principle of Berkeley's theory of matter' (*Works of Berkeley*, 1901, I, p. 114).—Ed.]

posed true of tangible objects : not that to suppose that vulgar error, was necessary for establishing the notion therein laid down ; but because it was beside my purpose to examine and refute it in a discourse concerning *vision*. So that in strict truth the ideas of sight, when we apprehend by them distance and things placed at a distance, do not suggest or mark out to us things actually existing at a distance, but only admonish us what ideas of touch will be imprinted in our minds at such and such distances of time, and in consequence of such and such actions. It is, I say, evident from what has been said in the foregoing parts of this treatise, and in ¹⁰ Sect. 147, and elsewhere of the essay concerning vision, that visible ideas are the language whereby the governing spirit, on whom we depend, informs us what tangible ideas he is about to imprint upon us, in case we excite this or that motion in our own bodies. But for a fuller information in this point, I refer to the essay it self.

45 Fourthly, it will be objected that from the foregoing principles it follows, things are every moment annihilated and created anew. The objects of sense exist only when they are perceived : the trees therefore are in the garden, or the chairs in the parlour, no longer than while there is some body by to perceive ²⁰ them. Upon shutting my eyes all the furniture in the room is reduced to nothing, and barely upon opening them it is again created. In answer to all which, I refer the reader to what has been said in Sect. 3, 4, &c. and desire he will consider whether he means any thing by the actual existence of an idea, distinct from its being perceived. For my part, after the nicest inquiry I could make, I am not able to discover that any thing else is meant by those words. And I once more entreat the reader to sound his own thoughts, and not suffer himself to be imposed on by words. If he can conceive it possible either for his ideas or their archetypes ³⁰ to exist without being perceived, then I give up the cause : but if he cannot, he will acknowledge it is unreasonable for him to stand up in defence of he knows not what, and pretend to charge on me as an absurdity, the not assenting to those propositions which at bottom have no meaning in them.

46 It will not be amiss to observe, how far the received principles of philosophy are themselves chargable with those pretended absurdities. It is thought strangely absurd that upon closing my eyelids, all the visible objects round me should be reduced to nothing ; and yet is not this what philosophers com- ⁴⁰ monly acknowledge, when they agree on all hands, that light and colours, which alone are the proper and immediate objects of

sight, are mere sensations that exist no longer than they are perceived? Again, it may to some perhaps seem very incredible, that things should be every moment creating, yet this very notion is commonly taught in the Schools. For the Schoolmen, though they acknowledge the existence of matter, and that the whole mundane fabrick is framed out of it, are nevertheless of opinion that it cannot subsist without the divine conseruation, which by them is expounded to be a continual creation.¹

47 Farther, a little thought will discover to us, that though we allow the existence of matter or corporeal substance, yet it will unavoidably follow from the principles which are now generally admitted, that the particular bodies of what kind soever, do none of them exist whilst they are not perceived. For it is evident from *Sect. 11.* and the following sections, that the matter philosophers contend for, is an incomprehensible somewhat which hath none of those particular qualities, whereby the bodies falling under our senses are distinguished one from another. But to make this more plain, it must be remarked, that the infinite divisibility of matter is now universally allowed, at least by the most approved and considerable philosophers, who on the received principles demonstrate it beyond all exception. Hence it follows, that there is an infinite number of parts in each particle of matter, which are not perceived by sense. The reason therefore, that any particular body seems to be of a finite magnitude, or exhibits only a finite number of parts to sense, is, not because it contains no more, since in itself it contains an infinite number of parts, but because the sense is not acute enough to discern them. In proportion therefore as the sense is rendered more acute, it perceives a greater number of parts in the object, that is, the object appears greater, and its figure varies, those parts in its extremities which were before unperceivable, appearing now to bound it in very different lines and angles from those perceived by an obtuser sense. And at length, after various changes of size and shape, when the sense becomes infinitely acute, the body shall seem infinite. During all which there is no alteration in the body, but only in the sense. Each body therefore considered in it self, is infinitely extended, and consequently void of all shape or figure. From which it

l 14 and the following sections—(A) etc. l 21 that there—(A) there.

¹ [E.g. St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, xii. 26 *ad finem*, 'Si potentiam suam, ut ita dicam, fabricatoriam rebus substrahat [Deus], ita non erunt, sicut antequam fierent non fuerunt'; also St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, I, qu. CIV, art. 1.—Ed.]

follows, that though we should grant the existence of matter to be ever so certain, yet it is withal as certain, the materialists themselves are by their own principles forced to acknowledge, that neither the particular bodies perceived by sense, nor any thing like them exists without the mind. Matter, I say, and each particle thereof is according to them infinite and shapeless, and it is the mind that frames all that variety of bodies which compose the visible world, any one whereof does not exist longer than it is perceived.

48 If we consider it, the objection proposed in *Sect. 45* will not be found reasonably charged on the principles we have premised, so as in truth to make any objection at all against our notions. For though we hold indeed the objects of sense to be nothing else but ideas which cannot exist unperceived; yet we may not hence conclude they have no existence except only while they are perceived by us, since there may be some other spirit that perceives them, though we do not. Wherever bodies are said to have no existence without the mind, I would not be understood to mean this or that particular mind, but all minds whatsoever. It does not therefore follow from the foregoing principles, that bodies are 20 annihilated and created every moment, or exist not at all during the intervals between our perception of them.

49 Fifthly, it may perhaps be objected, that if extension and figure exist only in the mind, it follows that the mind is extended and figured; since extension is a mode or attribute, which (to speak with the Schools) is predicated of the subject in which it exists. I answer, those qualities are in the mind only as they are perceived by it, that is, not by way of *mode* or *attribute*, but only by way of *idea*¹; and it no more follows, that the soul or mind is extended because extension exists in it alone, than it does that it is 30 red or blue, because those colours are on all hands acknowledged to exist in it, and no where else. As to what philosophers say of subject and mode, that seems very groundless and unintelligible. For instance, in this proposition, a die is hard, extended and square, they will have it that the word *die* denotes a subject or substance, distinct from the hardness, extension and figure, which are predicated of it, and in which they exist. This I cannot com-

l 2 ever—(A) *never*. *l 10 If we*—(A) *But after all, if we*. *l 29 that the soul*—(A) *the soul*.

¹ [Malebranche had written of sensations as *modifications* of mind, i.e. as mental. For Berkeley they are not mental, though existing only as objects of mind. —Ed.]

prehend : to me a die seems to be nothing distinct from those things which are termed its modes or accidents. And to say a die is hard, extended and square, is not to attribute those qualities to a subject distinct from and supporting them, but only an explication of the meaning of the word *die*.

50 Sixthly, you will say there have been a great many things explained by matter and motion : take away these, and you destroy the whole corpuscular philosophy, and undermine those mechanical principles which have been applied with so much success to account for the phenomena. In short, whatever advances have been made, either by ancient or modern philosophers, in the study of Nature, do all proceed on the supposition, that corporeal substance or matter doth really exist. To this I answer, that there is not any one phenomenon explained on that supposition, which may not as well be explained without it, as might easily be made appear by an induction of particulars. To explain the phenomena, is all one as to shew, why upon such and such occasions we are affected with such and such ideas. But how matter should operate on a spirit, or produce any idea in it, is what no philosopher will pretend to explain.¹ It is therefore evident, there can be no use of matter in natural philosophy. Besides, they who attempt to account for things, do it not by corporeal substance, but by figure, motion, and other qualities, which are in truth no more than mere ideas, and therefore cannot be the cause of any thing, as hath been already shewn. See Sect. 25.

51 Seventhly, it will upon this be demanded whether it does not seem absurd to take away natural causes, and ascribe every thing to the immediate operation of spirits ? We must no longer say upon these principles that fire heats, or water cools, but that a spirit heats, and so forth. Would not a man be deservedly laughed at, who should talk after this manner ? I answer, he would so ; in such things we ought to *think with the learned, and speak with the vulgar*.² They who to demonstration are convinced of the truth

l 23 and other qualities—(A) etc. l 30 and so forth—(A) etc.

¹ [One of Berkeley's characteristic appeals to a current philosophical commonplace. The Cartesian dualism consisted in assuming that (a) the ideal or definitory distinctness and opposition of mind and matter preclude any real connection between them, and (b) we have no concepts by which to make their apparent connection intelligible (so also Locke, *Essay*, IV iii 28).—Ed.]

² ['Loquendum est ut plures, sentiendum ut pauci,' from the sixteenth-century Italian Augustinus Niphus, *Comm. in Aristotelem de Gen. et Corr.*, lib. I. Berkeley quotes it again in *Alciphron* (I, 12). It had been quoted by Bacon in *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (V iv).—Ed.]

of the Copernican system, do nevertheless say the sun rises, the sun sets, or comes to the meridian : and if they affected a contrary style in common talk, it would without doubt appear very ridiculous. A little reflexion on what is here said will make it manifest, that the common use of language would receive no manner of alteration or disturbance from the admission of our tenets.

52 In the ordinary affairs of life, any phrases may be retained, so long as they excite in us proper sentiments, or dispositions to act in such a manner as is necessary for our well-being, how false soever they may be, if taken in a strict and speculative sense. ¹⁰ Nay this is unavoidable, since propriety being regulated by custom, language is suited to the received opinions, which are not always the truest. Hence it is impossible, even in the most rigid philosophic reasonings, so far to alter the bent and genius of the tongue we speak, as never to give a handle for cavillers to pretend difficulties and inconsistencies. But a fair and ingenuous reader will collect the sense, from the scope and tenor and connexion of a discourse, making allowances for those inaccurate modes of speech, which use has made inevitable.

53 As to the opinion that there are no corporeal causes, this ²⁰ has been heretofore maintained by some of the Schoolmen, as it is of late by others among the modern philosophers,¹ who though they allow matter to exist, yet will have God alone to be the immediate efficient cause of all things. These men saw, that amongst all the objects of sense, there was none which had any power or activity included in it, and that by consequence this was likewise true of whatever bodies they supposed to exist without the mind, like unto the immediate objects of sense. But then, that they should suppose an innumerable multitude of created beings, which they acknowledge are not capable of producing any one ³⁰ effect in Nature, and which therefore are made to no manner of purpose, since God might have done every thing as well without them ; this I say, though we should allow it possible, must yet be a very unaccountable and extravagant supposition.

¹ [Among the moderns Descartes, *Principia*, I xxviii ; Malebranche, *Recherche*, VI ii 3 ; Samuel Clarke, *Discourse of the Being and Attributes of God* ; cp. Locke, *Essay*, II xxi 2. Among the Schoolmen, Thomas Bradwardine (c. 1290-1349) expounded a theological determinism : 'Divina voluntas est causa efficiens cuiuslibet rei factae, movens seu motrix cuiuslibet motionis.' His doctrine is mentioned by Chaucer in the *Nonne Prieses Tale*, ll. 422ff. Nicolas d'Autrecourt (fourteenth century) approximates to him in affirming that only sequences, never consequences, are observed. That the connection of events is effected wholly by God had been maintained by Algazel (1059-1111).—Ed.]

8 54. In the eighth place, the universal concurrent assent of mankind may be thought by some, an invincible argument in behalf of matter, or the existence of external things. Must we suppose the whole world to be mistaken? And if so, what cause can be assigned of so widespread and predominant an error? I answer, first, that upon a narrow inquiry, it will not perhaps be found, so many as is imagined do really believe the existence of matter or things without the mind. Strictly speaking, to believe that which involves a contradiction, or has no meaning in it, is impossible: and whether the foregoing expressions are not of that sort, I refer it to the impartial examination of the reader. In one sense indeed, men may be said to believe that matter exists, that is, they act as if the immediate cause of their sensations, which affects them every moment and is so nearly present to them, were some senseless unthinking being. But that they should clearly apprehend any meaning marked by those words, and form therof a settled speculative opinion, is what I am not able to conceive. This is not the only instance wherein men impose upon themselves, by imagining they believe those propositions they have often heard, 20 though at bottom they have no meaning in them.

55. But secondly, though we should grant a notion to be ever so universally and stedfastly adhered to, yet this is but a weak argument of its truth, to whoever considers what a vast number of prejudices and false opinions are every where embraced with the utmost tenaciousness, by the unreflecting (which are the far greater) part of mankind. There was a time when the Antipodes and motion of the earth were looked upon as monstrous absurdities, even by men of learning: and if it be considered what a small proportion they bear to the rest of mankind, we shall find 30 that at this day, those notions have gained but a very inconsiderable footing in the world.

56. But it is demanded, that we assign a cause of this prejudice, and account for its obtaining in the world. To this I answer, that men knowing they perceived several ideas, whereof they themselves were not the authors, as not being excited from within, nor depending on the operation of their wills, this made them maintain, those ideas or objects of perception had an existence independent of, and without the mind, without ever dreaming that a contradiction was involved in those words. But philosophers 40 having plainly seen, that the immediate objects of perception do not exist without the mind, they in some degree corrected the 1 21 ever—(A) never.

mistake of the vulgar, but at the same time run into another which seems no less absurd, to wit, that there are certain objects really existing without the mind, or having a subsistence distinct from being perceived, of which our ideas are only images or resemblances, imprinted by those objects on the mind. And this notion of the philosophers owes its origin to the same cause with the former, namely, their being conscious that they were not the authors of their own sensations, which they evidently knew were imprinted from without, and which therefore must have some cause, distinct from the minds on which they are imprinted.

57 But why they should suppose the ideas of sense to be excited in us by things in their likeness, and not rather have recourse to *spirit* which alone can act, may be accounted for, first, because they were not aware of the repugnancy there is, as well in supposing things like unto our ideas existing without, as in attributing to them power or activity. Secondly, because the supreme spirit which excites those ideas in our minds, is not marked out and limited to our view by any particular finite collection of sensible ideas, as human agents are by their size, complexion, limbs, and motions. And thirdly, because his operations are 20 regular and uniform. Whenever the course of Nature is interrupted by a miracle, men are ready to own the presence of a superior agent. But when we see things go on in the ordinary course, they do not excite in us any reflection; their order and concatenation, though it be an argument of the greatest wisdom, power, and goodness in their Creator, is yet so constant and familiar to us, that we do not think them the immediate effects of a *free spirit*: especially since inconstancy and mutability in acting, though it be an imperfection, is looked on as a mark of freedom.

58 Tenthly, it will be objected, that the notions we advance, are inconsistent with several sound truths in philosophy and mathematics. For example, the motion of the earth is now universally admitted by astronomers, as a truth grounded on the clearest and most convincing reasons; but on the foregoing principles, there can be no such thing. For motion being only an idea, it follows that if it be not perceived, it exists not; but the motion of the earth is not perceived by sense. I answer, that tenet, if rightly understood, will be found to agree with the principles we have premised: for the question, whether the 40. earth moves or no, amounts in reality to no more than this, to
l 20 and motions—(A) motions, etc.

wit, whether we have reason to conclude from what hath been observed by astronomers, that if we were placed in such and such circumstances, and such or such a position and distance, both from the earth and sun, we should perceive the former to move among the choir of the planets, and appearing in all respects like one of them: and this, by the established rules of Nature, which we have no reason to mistrust, is reasonably collected from the phenomena.

59 We may, from the experience we have had of the train 10 and succession of ideas in our minds, often make, I will not say uncertain conjectures, but sure and well-grounded predictions, concerning the ideas we shall be affected with, pursuant to a great train of actions, and be enabled to pass a right judgment of what would have appeared to us, in case we were placed in circumstances very different from those we are in at present. Herein consists the knowledge of Nature, which may preserve its use and certainty very consistently with what hath been said. It will be easy to apply this to whatever objections of the like sort may be drawn from the magnitude of the stars, or any other discoveries 20 in astronomy or Nature.

60 In the eleventh place, it will be demanded to what purpose serves that curious organization of plants, and the admirable mechanism in the parts of animals; might not vegetables grow, and shoot forth leaves and blossoms, and animals perform all their motions, as well without as with all that variety of internal parts so elegantly contrived and put together, which being ideas have nothing powerful or operative in them, nor have any necessary connexion with the effects ascribed to them? If it be a spirit that immediately produces every effect by a *fiat*, or act of his will, 30 we must think all that is fine and artificial in the works, whether of man or Nature, to be made in vain. By this doctrine, though an artist hath made the spring and wheels, and every movement of a watch, and adjusted them in such a manner as he knew would produce the motions he designed; yet he must think all this done to no purpose, and that it is an intelligence which directs the index, and points to the hour of the day. If so, why may not the intelligence do it, without his being at the pains of making the movements, and putting them together? Why does not an empty case serve as well as another? And how comes it to pass, 40 that whenever there is any fault in the going of a watch, there is some corresponding disorder to be found in the movements, which being mended by a skilful hand, all is right again? The

like may be said of all the clockwork of Nature, great part whereof is so wonderfully fine and subtle, as scarce to be discerned by the best microscope. In short, it will be asked, how upon our principles any tolerable account can be given, or any final cause assigned of an innumerable multitude of bodies and machines framed with the most exquisite art, which in the common philosophy have very apposite uses assigned them, and serve to explain abundance of phenomena.

61 To all which I answer, first, that though there were some difficulties relating to the administration of providence, and the 10 uses by it assigned to the several parts of Nature, which I could not solve by the foregoing principles, yet this objection could be of small weight against the truth and certainty of those things which may be provcd *à priori*, with the utmost evidence. Secondly, but neither are the received principles free from the like difficulties; for it may still be demanded, to what end God should take those round-about methods of effecting things by instruments and machines, which no one can deny might have been effected by the mere command of his will, without all that *apparatus*: nay, if we narrowly consider it, we shall find the objection may be 20 retorted with greater force on those who hold the existence of those machines without the mind; for it has been made evident, that solidity, bulk, figure, motion and the like, have no *activity* or *efficacy* in them, so as to be capable of producing any one effect in Nature. See Sect. 25. Whoever therefore supposes them to exist (allowing the supposition possible) when they are not perceived, does it manifestly to no purpose; since the only use that is assigned to them, as they exist unperceived, is that they produce those perceptible effects, which in truth cannot be ascribed to any thing but spirit.

62 But to come nearer the difficulty, it must be observed, that though the fabrication of all those parts and organs be not absolutely necessary to the producing any effect, yet it is necessary to the producing of things in a constant, regular way, according to the Laws of Nature. There are certain general laws that run through the whole chain of natural effects: these are learned by the observation and study of Nature, and are by men applied as well to the framing artificial things for the use and ornament of life, as to the explaining the various phenomena: which explication consists only in shewing the conformity any particular 40

l 14 evidence—(A) evidence and rigor of demonstration. l 23 and the like—(A) etc.

l 31 nearer—(A) nigher.

phenomenon hath to the general Laws of Nature, or, which is the same thing, in discovering the *uniformity* there is in the production of natural effects ; as will be evident to whoever shall attend to the several instances, wherein philosophers pretend to account for appearances. That there is a great and conspicuous use in these regular constant methods of working observed by the Supreme Agent, hath been shewn in *Sect. 31.* And it is no less visible, that a particular size, figure, motion and disposition of parts are necessary, though not absolutely to the producing any effect, yet
10 to the producing it according to the standing mechanical Laws of Nature. Thus, for instance, it cannot be denied that God, or the intelligence which sustains and rules the ordinary course of things might, if he were minded to produce a miracle, choose all the motions on the dial-plate of a watch, though no body had ever made the movements, and put them in it : but yet if he will act agreeably to the rules of mechanism, by him for wise ends established and maintained in the Creation, it is necessary that those actions of the watchmaker, whereby he makes the movements and rightly adjusts them, precede the production of the aforesaid
20 motions ; as also that any disorder in them be attended with the perception of some corresponding disorder in the movements, which being once corrected all is right again.

63 It may indeed on some occasions be necessary, that the Author of Nature display his overruling power in producing some appearance out of the ordinary series of things. Such exceptions from the general rules of Nature are proper to surprise and awe men into an acknowledgement of the Divine Being : but then they are to be used but seldom, otherwise there is a plain reason why they should fail of that effect. Besides, God seems to
30 choose the convincing our reason of his attributes by the works of Nature, which discover so much harmony and contrivance in their make, and are such plain indications of wisdom and beneficence in their Author, rather than to astonish us into a belief of his being by anomalous and surprising events.

64 To set this matter in a yet clearer light, I shall observe that what has been objected in *Sect. 60* amounts in reality to no more than this : ideas are not any how and at random produced, there being a certain order and connexion between them, like to that of cause and effect : there are also several combinations
40 of them, made in a very regular and artificial manner, which seem like so many instruments in the hand of Nature, that being
l 12 which—(A) that.

hid as it were behind the scenes, have a secret operation in producing those appearances which are seen on the theatre of the world, being themselves discernible only to the curious eye of the philosopher. But since one idea cannot be the cause of another, to what purpose is that connexion? And since those instruments, being barely *inefficacious perceptions* in the mind, are not subservient to the production of natural effects; it is demanded why they are made, or, in other words, what reason can be assigned why God should make us, upon a close inspection into his works, behold so great variety of ideas, so artfully laid together, and so much according to rule; it not being credible, that he would be at the expense (if one may so speak) of all that art and regularity to no purpose?

65 To all which my answer is, first, that the connexion of ideas does not imply the relation of *cause* and *effect*, but only of a mark or *sign* with the thing *signified*. The fire which I see is not the cause of the pain I suffer upon my approaching it, but the mark that forewarns me of it. In like manner, the noise that I hear is not the effect of this or that motion or collision of the ambient bodies, but the sign thereof. Secondly, the reason why ideas are formed into machines, that is, artificial and regular combinations, is the same with that for combining letters into words. That a few original ideas may be made to signify a great number of effects and actions, it is necessary they be variously combined together: and to the end their use be permanent and universal, these combinations must be made by *rule*, and with *wise contrivance*. By this means abundance of information is conveyed unto us, concerning what we are to expect from such and such actions, and what methods are proper to be taken, for the exciting such and such ideas: which in effect is all that I conceive to be distinctly meant, when it is said that by discerning the figure, texture, and mechanism of the inward parts of bodies, whether natural or artificial, we may attain to know the several uses and properties depending thereon, or the nature of the thing.

66 Hence it is evident, that those things which under the notion of a cause co-operating or concurring to the production of effects, are altogether inexplicable, and run us into great absurdities, may be very naturally explained, and have a proper and obvious use assigned them, when they are considered only as marks or signs for our information. And it is the searching after, *l 11 credible—(A) imaginable.*

and endeavouring to understand those signs instituted by the Author of Nature, that ought to be the employment of the natural philosopher, and not the pretending to explain things by corporeal causes ; which doctrine seems to have too much estranged the minds of men from that active principle, that supreme and wise spirit, *in whom we live, move, and have our being.*¹

67 In the twelfth place, it may perhaps be objected, that though it be clear from what has been said, that there can be no such thing as an inert, senseless, extended, solid, figured, moveable substance, existing without the mind, such as philosophers describe matter : yet if any man shall leave out of his idea of *matter*, the positive ideas of extension, figure, solidity and motion, and say that he means only by that word, an inert senseless substance, that exists without the mind, or unperceived, which is the occasion of our ideas, or at the presence whereof God is pleased to excite ideas in us : it doth not appear, but that matter taken in this sense may possibly exist. In answer to which I say, first, that it seems no less absurd to suppose a substance without accidents, than it is to suppose accidents without a substance. But secondly, though we should grant this unknown substance may possibly exist, yet where can it be supposed to be ? That it exists not in the mind is agreed, and that it exists not in place is no less certain ; since all extension exists only in the mind, as hath been already proved. It remains therefore that it exists nowhere at all.

68 Let us examine a little the description that is here given us of *matter*. It neither acts, nor perceives, nor is perceived : for this is all that is meant by saying it is an inert, senseless, unknown substance ; which is a definition entirely made up of negatives, excepting only the relative notion of its standing under or supporting : but then it must be observed, that it *supports* nothing at all ; and how nearly this comes to the description of a *non-entity*, I desire may be considered. But, say you, it is the *unknown occasion*, at the

l 1 *those signs instituted by—(A) this language (if I may so call it) of. l 22 extension—(A) place or extension.*

¹ [ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἔσμεν (Acts xvii. 28). Berkeley's favourite quotation, recurring in Sect. 149, *Three Dialogues*, II and III (below, pp. 214 and 236), *Alciphron*, IV 14, *Theory of Vision Vindicated*, title page, and in the twelfth (Fraser's numbering) of his *Guardian* essays. In the *Philos. Commentaries*, entry 827, he refers to Spinoza's use of it in the *Opera Posthuma* (epistola xxi). Very probably he was first attracted to the text by Malebranche's impressive use of it at the end of the chapter on 'seeing all things in God' (*Recherche*, III ii 6). I have seen the text somewhere in Henry More's writings.—Ed.]

presence of which, ideas are excited in us by the will of God.¹ Now I would fain know how any thing can be present to us, which is neither perceptible by sense nor reflection, nor capable of producing any idea in our minds, nor is at all extended, nor hath any form, nor exists in any place. The words *to be present*, when thus applied, must needs be taken in some abstract and strange meaning, and which I am not able to comprehend.

69 Again, let us examine what is meant by *occasion*: so far as I can gather from the common use of language, that word signifies, either the agent which produces any effect, or else something that is observed to accompany, or go before it, in the ordinary course of things. But when it is applied to matter as above described, it can be taken in neither of those senses. For matter is said to be passive and inert, and so cannot be an agent or efficient cause. It is also unperceivable, as being devoid of all sensible qualities, and so cannot be the occasion of our perceptions in the latter sense: as when the burning my finger is said to be the occasion of the pain that attends it. What therefore can be meant by calling matter an *occasion*? This term is either used in no sense at all, or else in some sense very distant from its received signification.

70 You will perhaps say that matter, though it be not perceived by us, is nevertheless perceived by God, to whom it is the occasion of exciting ideas in our minds. For, say you, since we observe our sensations to be imprinted in an orderly and constant manner, it is but reasonable to suppose there are certain constant and regular occasions of their being produced. That is to say, that there are certain permanent and distinct parcels of matter, corresponding to our ideas, which, though they do not excite them in our minds, or any ways immediately affect us, as being altogether passive and unperceivable to us, they are nevertheless to God, by whom they are perceived, as it were so many occasions to remind him when and what ideas to imprint on our minds: that so things may go on in a constant uniform manner.

l 20 *some sense very*—(A) *some very*. l 30 *ways*—(A) *wise*.

¹ [Occasionalism arose out of the Cartesian dualism: since the corporeal and the mental cannot act on one another, a change in the one must be styled the *occasion* of a regular change in the other. Malebranche substituted 'occasion' for 'cause' even within the sphere of matter, so that for him matter, being unknown, is an 'unknown occasion.' Berkeley was an occasionalist so far as he denied corporeal causality, but for him the corporeal is the sensory, and therefore a known occasion.—Ed.]

71 In answer to this I observe, that as the notion of matter is here stated, the question is no longer concerning the existence of a thing distinct from *spirit* and *idea*, from perceiving and being perceived : but whether there are not certain ideas, of I know not what sort, in the mind of God, which are so many marks or notes that direct him how to produce sensations in our minds, in a constant and regular method : much after the same manner as a musician is directed by the notes of music to produce that harmonious train and composition of sound, which is called a *tune* ;
 10 though they who hear the music do not perceive the notes, and may be entirely ignorant of them. But this notion of matter seems too extravagant to deserve a confutation. Besides, it is in effect no objection against what we have advanced, to wit, that there is no senseless, unperceived *substance*.

72 If we follow the light of reason, we shall, from the constant uniform method of our sensations, collect the goodness and wisdom of the *spirit* who excites them in our minds. But this is all that I can see reasonably concluded from thence. To me, I say, it is evident that the being of a *spirit infinitely wise, good, and powerful* is
 20 abundantly sufficient to explain all the appearances of Nature. But as for *inert senseless matter*, nothing that I perceive has any the least connexion with it, or leads to the thoughts of it. And I would fain see any one explain any the meanest phenomenon in Nature by it, or shew any manner of reason, though in the lowest rank of probability, that he can have for its existence ; or even make any tolerable sense or meaning of that supposition. For as to its being an occasion, we have, I think, evidently shewn that with regard to us it is no occasion : it remains therefore that it must be, if at all, the occasion to God of exciting ideas in us ; and what this
 30 amounts to, we have just now seen.

73 It is worth while to reflect a little on the motives which induced men to suppose the existence of material substance ; that so having observed the gradual ceasing, and expiration of those motives or reasons, we may proportionably withdraw the assent that was grounded on them. First therefore, it was thought that colour, figure, motion, and the rest of the sensible qualities or accidents, did really exist without the mind ; and for this reason, it seemed needful to suppose some unthinking *substratum* or *substance* wherein they did exist, since they could not be conceived
 40 to exist by themselves. Afterwards, in process of time, men being

l 11 matter—(A) matter (which after all is the only intelligible one that I can pick, from what is said of unknown occasions).

convinced that colours, sounds, and the rest of the sensible secondary qualities had no existence without the mind, they stripped this *substratum* or material substance of those qualities, leaving only the primary ones, figure, motion, and such like, which they still conceived to exist without the mind, and consequently to stand in need of a material support. But it having been shewn, that none, even of these, can possibly exist otherwise than in a spirit or mind which perceives them, it follows that we have no longer any reason to suppose the being of *matter*. Nay, that it is utterly impossible there should be any such thing, so long as that word is taken to denote an *unthinking substratum* of qualities or accidents, whcrein they exist without the mind.

74 But though it be allowed by the *materialists* themselves, that matter was thought of only for the sake of supporting accidents ; and the reason entirely ceasing, one might expect the mind should naturally, and without any reluctance at all, quit the belief of what was solely grounded thereon. Yet the prejudice is riveted so deeply in our thoughts, that we can scarce tell how to part with it, and are therefore inclined, since the *thing* it self is indefensible, at least to retain the *name* ; which we apply to I 20 know not what abstracted and indefinite notions of *being*, or *occasion*, though without any shew or reason, at least so far as I can see. For what is there on our part, or what do we perceive amongst all the ideas, sensations, notions, which are imprinted on our minds, either by sense or reflexion, from whence may be inferred the existence of an inert, thoughtless, unperceived occasion ? and on the other hand, on the part of an *all-sufficient spirit*, what can there be that should make us believe, or even suspect, he is *directed* by an inert occasion to excite ideas in our minds ?

75 It is a very extraordinary instance of the force of prejudice, and much to be lamented, that the mind of man retains so great a fondness against all the evidence of reason, for a stupid thoughtless *somewhat*, by the interposition whereof it would, as it were, screen it self from the providence of God, and remove him farther off from the affairs of the world. But though we do the utmost we can, to secure the belief of *matter*, though when reason forsakes us, we endeavour to support our opinion on the bare possibility of the thing, and though we indulge our selves in the full scope of an imagination not regulated by reason, to make out that poor 40

l 4 and such like—(A) etc. l 21 being, or occasion—(A) being, occasion, etc. l 35 him—(A) it.

possibility, yet the upshot of all is, that there are certain *unknown ideas* in the mind of God ; for this, if any thing, is all that I conceive to be meant by *occasion* with regard to God. And this, at the bottom, is no longer contending for the *thing*, but for the *name*.

76 Whether therefore there are such ideas in the mind of God, and whether they may be called by the name *matter*, I shall not dispute. But if you stick to the notion of an unthinking substance, or support of extension, motion, and other sensible qualities, then to me it is most evidently impossible there should be any such thing. Since it is a plain repugnancy, that those qualities should exist in or be supported by an unperceiving substance.

77 But say you, though it be granted that there is no thoughtless support of extension, and the other qualities or accidents which we perceive ; yet there may, perhaps, be some inert unperceiving substance, or *substratum* of some other qualities, as incomprehensible to us as colours are to a man born blind, because we have not a sense adapted to them. But if we had a new sense,¹ we should possibly no more doubt of their existence, than a blind man made to see does of the existence of light and colours. I answer, first, if what you mean by the word *matter* be only the unknown support of unknown qualities, it is no matter whether there is such a thing or no,² since it no way concerns us : and I do not see the advantage there is in disputing about we know not *what*, and we know not *why*.

78 But secondly, if we had a new sense, it could only furnish us with new ideas or sensations : and then we should have the same reason against their existing in an unperceiving substance, that has been already offered with relation to figure, motion, colour, and the like. Qualities, as hath been shewn, are nothing else but *sensations* or *ideas*, which exist only in a *mind* perceiving them ; and this is true not only of the ideas we are acquainted with at present, but likewise of all possible ideas whatsoever.

79 But you will insist, what if I have no reason to believē the existence of matter, what if I cannot assign any use to it, or explain *t 9 and other sensible qualities*—(A) etc. *t 23 And I*—(A) *And for my part, I. t 30 and the like*—(A) etc.

¹ [Entry 601 of the *Philos. Commentaries* proves that Berkeley has in mind a remark of Locke's that we want a sense for substance. I cannot light on one in the *Essay*, II xxiii ; perhaps I iv 18 is intended.—Ed.] ² [This sentence may have been the source of Byron's witticism (*Don Juan*, canto XI i) :

When Bishop Berkeley said 'there was no matter,'

And provcd it—'twas no matter what he said.—Ed.]

any thing by it, or even conceive what is meant by that word? Yet still it is no contradiction to say that matter exists, and that this matter is *in general a substance, or occasion of ideas*; though, indeed, to go about to unfold the meaning, or adhere to any particular explication of those words, may be attended with great difficulties. I answer, when words are used without a meaning, you may put them together as you please, without danger of running into a contradiction. You may say, for example, that *twice two* is equal to *seven*, so long as you declare you do not take the words of that proposition in their usual acceptation, but for 10 marks of you know not what. And by the same reason you may say, there is an inert thoughtless substance without accidents, which is the occasion of our ideas. And we shall understand just as much by one proposition, as the other.

80 In the last place, you will say, what if we give up the cause of material substance, and assert, that matter is an unknown *somewhat*, neither substance nor accident, spirit nor idea, inert, thoughtless, indivisible, immoveable, unextended, existing in no place? For, say you, whatever may be urged against *substance* or *occasion*, or any other positive or relative notion of matter, hath 20 no place at all, so long as this *negative* definition of matter is adhered to. I answer, you may, if so it shall seem good, use the word *matter* in the same sense, that other men use *nothing*, and so make those terms convertible in your style. For after all, this is what appears to me to be the result of that definition, the parts whereof when I consider with attention, either collectively, or separate from each other, I do not find that there is any kind of effect or impression made on my mind, different from what is excited by the term *nothing*.

81 You will reply perhaps, that in theforesaid definition is 30 included, what doth sufficiently distinguish it from nothing, the positive, abstract idea of *quiddity, entity, or existence*. I own indeed, that those who pretend to the faculty of framing abstract general ideas, do talk as if they had such an idea, which is, say they, the most abstract and general notion of all, that is to me the most incomprehensible of all others. That there are a great variety of spirits of different orders and capacities, whose faculties, both in number and extent, are far exceeding those the Author of my being has bestowed on me, I see no reason to deny. And for me to pretend to determine by my own few, stinted, narrow inlets of 40 pcreption, what ideas the inexhaustible power of the Supreme
l 16 assert—(A) stand to it. l 30 You will reply perhaps—(A) Upon this, you'll reply.

Spirit may imprint upon them, were certainly the utmost folly and presumption. Since there may be, for aught that I know, innumerable sorts of ideas or sensations, as different from one another, and from all that I have perceived, as colours are from sounds. But how ready soever I may be, to acknowledge the scantiness of my comprehension, with regard to the endless variety of spirits and ideas, that might possibly exist, yet for any one to pretend to a notion of entity or existence, abstracted from spirit and *idea*, from perceiving and being perceived, is, I suspect, 10 a downright repugnancy and trifling with words. It remains that we consider the objections, which may possibly be made on the part of religion.

82 Some there are who think,¹ that though the arguments for the real existence of bodies, which are drawn from reason, be allowed not to amount to demonstration, yet the Holy Scriptures are so clear in the point, as will sufficiently convince every good Christian, that bodies do really exist, and are something more than mere ideas ; there being in Holy Writ innumerable facts related, which evidently suppose the reality of timber, and stone, mountains, 20 and rivers, and cities, and human bodies. To which I answer, that no sort of writings whatever, sacred or profane, which use those and the like words in the vulgar acceptation, or so as to have a meaning in them, are in danger of having their truth called in question by our doctrine. That all those things do really exist, that there are bodies, even corporeal substances, when taken in the vulgar sense, has been shown to be agreeable to our principles : and the difference betwixt *things* and *ideas*, *realities* and *chimeras*, has been distinctly explained.* And I do not think, that either what philosophers call *matter*, or the existence of objects without 30 the mind, is any where mentioned in Scripture.

83 Again, whether there be, or be not external things, it is agreed on all hands, that the proper use of words, is the marking out conceptions, or things only as they are known and perceived by us ; whence it plainly follows, that in the tenets we have laid down, there is nothing inconsistent with the right use and significance of *language*, and that discourse of what kind soever, so far as 17 might—(A) may. 18 bodies—(A) bodies, etc.

¹ [The reference is primarily to Malebranche, *Entretiens sur la Métaphysique*, VI viii. Bayle had argued that natural reason cannot prove the existence of a corporeal world (*Dict. Historique*, art. ‘Zenon,’ Note H ; art. ‘Pyrrhon,’ Note B).—Ed.]

* Sect. 29, 30, 33, 36, &c.

it is intelligible, remains undisturbed. But all this seems so manifest, from what hath been set forth in the premises, that it is needless to insist any farther on it.

84. But it will be urged, that miracles do, at least, lose much of their stress and import by our principles. What must we think of Moses's rod, was it not *really* turned into a serpent, or was there only a change of *ideas* in the minds of the spectators? And can it be supposed, that our Saviour did no more at the marriage-feast in Cana, than impose on the sight, and smell, and taste of the guests, so as to create in them the appearance or idea only of wine? The same may be said of all other miracles: which, in consequence of the foregoing principles, must be looked upon only as so many cheats, or illusion of fancy. To this I reply, that the rod was changed into a real serpent, and the water into real wine. That this doth not, in the least, contradict what I have elsewhere said, will be evident from *Sect. 34*, and *35*. But this business of *real* and *imaginary* hath been already so plainly and fully explained, and so often referred to, and the difficulties about it are so easily answered from what hath gone before, that it were an affront to the reader's understanding, to resume the explication of it in this place. I shall only observe, that if at table all who were present should see, and smell, and taste, and drink wine, and find the effects of it, with me there could be no doubt of its reality. So that, at bottom, the scruple concerning real miracles hath no place at all on ours, but only on the received principles, and consequently maketh rather *for*, than *against* what hath been said.¹

85. Having done with the objections, which I endeavoured to propose in the clearest light, and gave them all the force and weight I could, we proceed in the next place to take a view of our tenets in their consequences. Some of these appear at first sight, as that several difficult and obscure questions, on which abundance of speculation hath been thrown away, are entirely banished from philosophy. Whether corporeal substance can think? Whether matter be infinitely divisible? And how it operates on spirit?

l 1 so manifest—(A) so very manifest. l 2 set forth—(A) largely set forth.

¹ [In his anticipation of objections from the side of religious orthodoxy, Berkeley overlooked the apparent difficulty of reconciling his theory of the corporeal world with the Scriptural account of the Creation. Four days after receiving a copy of the *Principles* Sir John Percival put a question posed by his wife: 'If there be nothing but spirit and ideas, what you make of that part of the six days' creation which preceded man.' Berkeley replied on 6th September, 1710. Lady Percival's query was doubtless the reason for the inclusion of the topic in the *Three Dialogues* (below, p. 250).—Ed.]

these and the like inquiries have given infinite amusement to philosophers in all ages. But depending on the existence of *matter*, they have no longer any place on our principles. Many other advantages there are, as well with regard to *religion* as the *sciences*, which it is easy for any one to deduce from what hath been premised. But this will appear more plainly in the sequel.

86 From the principles we have laid down, it follows, human knowledge may naturally be reduced to two heads, that of *ideas*, and that of *spirits*. Of each of these I shall treat in order. And ¹⁰ first as to ideas or unthinking things, our knowledge of these hath been very much obscured and confounded, and we have been led into very dangerous errors, by supposing a twofold existence of the objects of sense, the one *intelligible*, or in the mind, the other *real* and without the mind : whereby unthinking things are thought to have a natural subsistence of their own, distinct from being perceived by spirits. This which, if I mistake not, hath been shewn to be a most groundless and absurd notion, is the very root of *scepticism* ; for so long as men thought that real things subsisted without the mind, and that their knowledge was only so far forth ²⁰ *real* as it was conformable to *real things*, it follows, they could not be certain that they had any real knowledge at all. For how can it be known, that the things which are perceived, are conformable to those which are not perceived, or exist without the mind ?

87 Colour, figure, motion, extension and the like, considered only as so many *sensations* in the mind, are perfectly known, there being nothing in them which is not perceived. But if they are looked on as notes or images, referred to *things* or *archetypes*¹ existing without the mind, then are we involved all in *scepticism*. We see only the appearances, and not the real qualities of things. What ³⁰ may be the extension, figure, or motion of any thing really and absolutely, or in it self, it is impossible for us to know, but only the proportion or the relation they bear to our senses. Things remaining the same, our ideas vary, and which of them, or even whether any of them at all represent the true quality really existing in the thing, it is out of our reach to determine. So that, for aught we

l 25 so many—(MS.) actual. l 32 or the relation—(A) or relation.

¹ [Cp. Locke, *Essay*, IV iv 8, 'To make our knowledge real, it is requisite the ideas answer their archetypes' ; also IV iv 12, 'Our ideas of substances, being supposed copies, and referred to archetypes without us. . . .' On archetypes not as supposed corporeal originals of mental copies but as models in the divine intellect, Berkeley seems to have had an open mind (see below, p. 268).—Ed.]

know, all we see, hear, and feel, may be only phantom and vain chimera, and not at all agree with the real things, existing in *rerum natura*. All this scepticism follows, from our supposing a difference between *things* and *ideas*, and that the former have a subsistence without the mind, or unperceived. It were easy to dilate on this subject, and shew how the arguments urged by *sceptics* in all ages, depend on the supposition of external objects.

88 So long as we attribute a real existence to unthinking things, distinct from their being perceived, it is not only impossible for us to know with evidence the nature of any real unthinking being, ¹⁰ but even that it exists. Hence it is, that we see philosophers distrust their senses, and doubt of the existence of heaven and earth, of every thing they see or feel, even of their own bodies. And after all their labour and struggle of thought, they are forced to own, we cannot attain to any self-evident or demonstrative knowledge of the existence of sensible things. But all this doubtfulness, which so bewilders and confounds the mind, and makes *philosophy* ridiculous in the eyes of the world, vanishes, if we annex a meaning to our words, and do not amuse our selves with the terms *absolute*, *external*, *exist*, and such like, signifying we know not what. I can ²⁰ as well doubt of my own being, as of the being of those things which I actually perceive by sense: it being a manifest contradiction, that any sensible object should be immediately perceived by sight or touch, and at the same time have no existence in Nature, since the very existence of an unthinking being consists in *being perceived*.

89 Nothing seems of more importance, towards erecting a firm system of sound and real knowledge, which may be proof against the assaults of *scepticism*, than to lay the beginning in a distinct explication of what is meant by *thing*, *reality*, *existence*: ³⁰ for in vain shall we dispute concerning the real existence of things, or pretend to any knowledge thereof, so long as we have not fixed the meaning of those words. *Thing* or *being* is the most general name of all, it comprehends under it two kinds entirely distinct and heterogeneous, and which have nothing common but the name, to wit, *spirits*, and *ideas*. The former are *active*, *indivisible* substances: the latter are *inert*, *fleeting*, *dependent* beings, which

¹³ *scepticism*—(A) sceptical cant. ¹⁷ objects—(A) objects. But this is too obvious to need being insisted on. ¹⁴ labour—(A) labouring. ¹⁵ self-evident—(MS.) intuitive. ¹⁸ in the eyes of the world—(MS.) to men of common sense. ¹⁹ and do not—(A) and not. ²⁰ and such like—(A) etc. ²⁰ I can—(A) For my part, I can. ³⁶ indivisible substances—(A) indivisible, incorruptible substances. ³⁷ fleeting, dependent—(A) fleeting, perishable passions, or dependent.

subsist not by themselves, but are supported by, or exist in minds or spiritual substances. We comprehend our own existence by inward feeling or reflexion, and that of other spirits by reason. We may be said to have some knowledge or notion of our own minds, of spirits and active beings, whereof in a strict sense we have not ideas. In like manner we know and have a notion of relations between things or ideas, which relations are distinct from the ideas or things related, inasmuch as the latter may be perceived by us without our perceiving the former. To me it seems 10 that ideas, spirits and relations are all in their respective kinds, the object of human knowledge and subject of discourse : and that the term *idea* would be improperly extended to signify every thing we know or have any notion of.

90 Ideas imprinted on the senses are real things, or do really exist ; this we do not deny, but we deny they can subsist without the minds which perceive them, or that they are resemblances of any archetypes existing without the mind : since the very being of a sensation or idea consists in being perceived, and an idea can be like nothing but an idea. Again, the things perceived by sense 20 may be termed *external*, with regard to their origin, in that they are not generated from within, by the mind itself, but imprinted by a spirit distinct from that which perceives them. Sensible objects may likewise be said to be without the mind, in another sense, namely when they exist in some other mind. Thus when I shut my eyes, the things I saw may still exist, but it must be in another mind.

91 It were a mistake to think, that what is here said derogates in the least from the reality of things. It is acknowledged on the received principles, that extension, motion, and in a word all 30 sensible qualities, have need of a support, as not being able to subsist by themselves. But the objects perceived by sense, are allowed to be nothing but combinations of those qualities, and consequently cannot subsist by themselves. Thus far it is agreed on all hands. So that in denying the things perceived by sense, an existence independent of a substance, or support wherein they may exist, we detract nothing from the received opinion of their *reality*, and are guilty of no innovation in that respect. All the difference is, that according to us the unthinking beings perceived by sense, have no existence distinct from being perceived, and 40 cannot therefore exist in any other substance, than those unextended, indivisible substances, or *spirits*, which act, and think, 12 *We comprehend . . . (to end of Section)—(B only)*.

and perceive them : whereas philosophers vulgarly hold, that the sensible qualities exist in an inert, extended, unperceiving substance, which they call *matter*, to which they attribute a natural subsistence, exterior to all thinking beings, or distinct from being perceived by any mind whatsoever, even the eternal mind of the Creator,¹ wherin they suppose only ideas of the corporeal substances created by him : if indeed they allow them to be at all created.

92 For as we have shewn the doctrine of matter or corporeal substance, to have been the main pillar and support of *scepticism*,¹⁰ so likewise upon the same foundation have been raised all the impious schemes of *atheism* and irreligion. Nay so great a difficulty hath it been thought, to conceive matter produced out of nothing, that the most celebrated among the ancient philosophers, even of these who maintained the being of a God, have thought matter to be uncreated and coeternal with him.² How great a friend material substance hath been to *atheists* in all ages, were needless to relate. All their monstrous systems have so visible and necessary a dependence on it, that when this corner-stone is once removed, the whole fabric cannot choose but fall to the ground ; insomuch²⁰ that it is no longer worth while, to bestow a particular consideration on the absurdities of every wretched sect of *atheists*.

93 That impious and profane persons should readily fall in with those systems which favour their inclinations, by deriding immaterial substance, and supposing the soul to be divisible and subject to corruption as the body ; which exclude all freedom, intelligence, and design from the formation of things, and instead threof make a self-existent, stupid, unthinking substance the root and origin of all beings. That they should hearken to those who deny a providence, or inspection of a superior mind over the³⁰ affairs of the world, attributing the whole series of events either to blind chance or fatal necessity, arising from the impulse of one

I hold, that the sensible qualities exist—(A) hold, the sensible qualities do exist.

¹ [God as securing the continued existence of the corporeal world by His continual perception of it is here, and in Sect. 48, brought in casually. In the *Three Dialogues* this thought becomes his chief proof of God, (see below p. 152).—Ed.]

² [The eternity of matter was the assumption of the pre-Socratics, and the explicit doctrine of Aristotle (*οὐτε γέγονεν ὁ πᾶς οὐρανὸς οὐτε ἐνδέχεται φθαρῆναι, De Coelo*, II. i. 283b26). Plato, on the contrary, by regarding time as created, as “the moving image of eternity,” puts the corporeal on the same level—*χρόνος δοῦν μετ’ οὐρανοῦ γέγονεν ἵνα ἀμα γεννηθέντες ἀμα καὶ λυθῶν, ἀν ποτε λύοις τις αὐτῶν γίγνηται* (*Timaeus*, 38, B6). Most of the physicists of Berkeley’s day assumed the eternity of matter.—Ed.]

body on another. All this is very natural. And on the other hand, when men of better principles observe the enemies of religion lay so great a stress on *unthinking matter*, and all of them use so much industry and artifice to reduce every thing to it ; methinks they should rejoice to see them deprived of their grand support, and driven from that only fortress, without which your Epicureans, Hobbists, and the like, have not even the shadow of a pretence, but become the most cheap and easy triumph in the world.

10 94 The existence of matter, or bodies unperceived, has not only been the main support of *atheists* and *fatalists*, but on the same principle doth *idolatry* likewise in all its various forms depend. Did men but consider that the sun, moon, and stars, and every other object of the senses, are only so many sensations in their minds, which have no other existence but barely being perceived, doubtless they would never fall down, and worship their own *ideas* ; but rather address their homage to that eternal invisible Mind which produces and sustains all things.

95 The same absurd principle, by mingling it self with the 20 articles of our faith, hath occasioned no small difficulties to Christians. For example, about the *resurrection*, how many scruples and objections have been raised by Socinians and others ?¹ But do not the most plausible of them depend on the supposition, that a body is denominated the *same*, with regard not to the form or that which is perceived by sense, but the material substance which remains the same under several forms ? Take away this *material substance*, about the identity whereof all the dispute is, and mean by *body* what every plain ordinary person means by that word, to wit, that which is immediately seen and felt, which is only a combination of sensible qualities, or *ideas* : and then their most unanswerable objections come to nothing.

96 Matter being once expelled out of Nature, drags with it so many sceptical and impious notions, such an incredible number of disputes and puzzling questions, which have been thorns in the sides of divines, as well as philosophers, and made so much fruitless work for mankind ; that if the arguments we have produced against it, are not found equal to demonstration (as to me they evidently seem) yet I am sure all friends to knowledge, peace, and religion, have reason to wish they were. //

l 6 support—(MS.) *asylum*. l 11 the same principle—(A) the principle. l 15 but barely—(MS.) *independent of their*. l 22 and others—(MS.) *and natural philosophers*.

¹ [See Berkeley's first letter to Johnson, below, p. 282.—Ed.]

97 Beside the external existence of the objects of perception, another great source of errors and difficulties, with regard to ideal knowledge, is the doctrine of *abstract ideas*, such as it hath been set forth in the Introduction. The plainest things in the world, those we are most intimately acquainted with, and perfectly know, when they are considered in an abstract way, appear strangely difficult and incomprehensible. Time, place, and motion, taken in particular or concrete, are what every body knows ; but having passed through the hands of a metaphysician, they become too abstract and fine, to be apprehended by men of ordinary sense. ¹⁰ Bid your servant meet you at such a *time*, in such a *place*, and he shall never stay to deliberate on the meaning of those words : in conceiving that particular time and place, or the motion by which he is to get thither, he finds not the least difficulty. But if *time* be taken, exclusive of all those particular actions and ideas that diversify the day, merely for the continuation of existence, or duration in abstract, then it will perhaps gravel even a philosopher to comprehend it.¹

98 Whenever I attempt to frame a simple idea of *time*, abstracted from the succession of ideas in my mind, which flows ²⁰ uniformly, and is participated by all beings, I am lost and embangled in inextricable difficulties. I have no notion of it at all, only I hear others say, it is infinitely divisible, and speak of it in such a manner as leads me to entertain odd thoughts of my existence : since that doctrine lays one under an absolute necessity of thinking, either that he passes away innumerable ages without a thought, or else that he is annihilated every moment of his life : both which seem equally absurd. Time therefore being nothing, abstracted from the succession of ideas in our minds,² it follows that the duration of any finite spirit must be ³⁰ estimated by the number of ideas or actions succeeding each other in that same spirit or mind. Hence it is a plain consequence that the soul always thinks³ : and in truth whoever shall go about to

¹ 19 Whenever—(A) For my own part, whenever. 1 24 entertain—(A) harbour.

¹ [Cp. St. Augustine, *Conf.*, xi 14, 'Quid est tempus? Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio ; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio.' Berkeley told Johnson (below, p. 293) that he had been interested early in the subject of time. His *Philos. Commentaries* opens with notes on it.—Ed.] ² [In his second letter to Johnson (below, p. 293), Berkeley writes even more definitely : 'A succession of ideas I take to constitute time, and not to be only the sensible measure thereof, as Mr. Locke and others think.'—Ed.] ³ [That the soul always thinks had been maintained by Descartes, *Responsio ad Quintas Objectiones*.—Ed.]

divide in his thoughts, or abstract the *existence* of a spirit from its *cogitation*, will, I believe, find it no easy task.

99 So likewise, when we attempt to abstract extension and motion from all other qualities, and consider them by themselves, we presently lose sight of them, and run into great extravagancies. All which depend on a two-fold abstraction : first, it is supposed that extension, for example, may be abstracted from all other sensible qualities ; and secondly, that the entity of extension may be abstracted from its being perceived. But whoever shall reflect, and take care to understand what he says, will, if I mistake not, acknowledge that all sensible qualities are alike *sensations*, and alike *real* ; that where the extension is, there is the colour too, to wit, in his mind, and that their archetypes can exist only in some other *mind* : and that the objects of sense are nothing but those sensations combined, blended, or (if one may so speak) concreted together : none of all which can be supposed to exist unperceived.

100 What it is for a man to be happy, or an object good, every one may think he knows. But to frame an abstract idea of *happiness*, prescinded from all particular pleasure, or of *goodness*, from every thing that is good, this is what few can pretend to. So likewise, a man may be just and virtuous, without having precise ideas of *justice* and *virtue*. The opinion that those and the like words stand for general notions abstracted from all particular persons and actions, seems to have rendered morality difficult, and the study thereof of less use to mankind. And in effect, the

l 2 cogitation—(MS) perception l 2 (MS adds to Section) Sure I am that shou'd any one tell me there is a time wherein a spirit actually exists without perceiving, or an idea without being perceiv'd, or that there is a 3rd sort of being which exists tho it neither wills nor perceives nor is perceived, his words would have no other effect on my mind than if he talk'd in an unknown language. Tis indeed an easie matter for a man to say the mind exists without thinking, but to conceive a meaning that may correspond to those sounds, or to frame a notion of a spirit's existence abstracted from its thinking, this seems to me impossible, and I suspect that even they who are the stiffest abettors of that tenent might abate somewhat of their firmness wou'd they but lay aside the words and calmly attending to their own thoughts examine what they meant by them. l 5 extravagancies—(A) extravagancies. Hence spring those odd paradoxes, that the fire is not hot, nor the wall white, etc. or that heat and colour are in the objects, nothing but figure and motion. l 17 (A adds to Section) And that, consequently, the wall is as truly white, as it is extended, and in the same sense. l 25 difficult—(A) very difficult. l 26 less use—(A) small use. l 26 in effect, the doctrine—(A) in effect, one may make a great progress in School-Ethics, without ever being the wiser or better man for it, or knowing how to behave himself in the affairs of life, more to the advantage of himself, or his neighbours, than he did before. This hint may suffice, to let any one see, the doctrine.

doctrine of *abstraction* has not a little contributed towards spoiling the most useful parts of knowledge.

101 The two great provinces of speculative science, conversant about ideas received from sense and their relations, are *natural philosophy* and *mathematics*; with regard to each of these I shall make some observations. And first, I shall say somewhat of natural philosophy. On this subject it is, that the *sceptics* triumph: all that stock of arguments they produce to depreciate our faculties, and make mankind appear ignorant and low, are drawn principally from this head, to wit, that we are under an 10 invincible blindness as to the *true* and *real* nature of things. This they exaggerate, and love to enlarge on. We are miserably bantered, say they, by our senses, and amused only with the outside and shew of things. The real essence, the internal qualities, and constitution of every the meanest object, is hid from our view; something there is in every drop of water, every grain of sand, which it is beyond the power of human understanding to fathom or comprehend. But it is evident from what has been shewn, that all this complaint is groundless, and that we are influenced by false principles to that degree as to mistrust our 20 senses, and think we know nothing of those things which we perfectly comprehend.

102 One great inducement to our pronouncing our selves ignorant of the nature of things, is the current opinion that every thing includes within it self the cause of its properties: or that there is in each object an inward essence, which is the source whence its discernible qualities flow, and whereon they depend. Some have pretended to account for appearances by occult qualities, but of late they are mostly resolved into mechanical causes, to wit, the figure, motion, weight, and such like qualities 30 of insensible particles: whereas in truth, there is no other agent or efficient cause than *spirit*, it being evident that motion, as well as all other *ideas*, is perfectly inert. See Sect. 25. Hence, to endeavour to explain the production of colours or sounds, by figure, motion, magnitude and the like, must needs be labour in vain. And accordingly, we see the attempts of that kind are not at all satisfactory. Which may be said, in general, of those instances, wherein one idea or quality is assigned for the cause of another. I need not say, how many *hypotheses* and speculations are left out, and how much the study of Nature is abridged by this doctrine. 40

l 4 and their relations (B only). l 30 and such like qualities—(A) etc. l 34 colours or sounds—(A) colours, sounds, etc.

103 The great mechanical principle now in vogue is *attraction*. That a stone falls to the earth, or the sea swells towards the moon, may to some appear sufficiently explained thereby. But how are we enlightened by being told this is done by attraction? Is it that that word signifies the manner of the tendency, and that it is by the mutual drawing of bodies, instead of their being impelled or protruded towards each other? But nothing is determined of the manner or action, and it may as truly (for aught we know) be termed *impulse* or *protrusion* as *attraction*. Again, the parts of steel 10 we see cohere firmly together, and this also is accounted for by attraction; but in this, as in the other instances, I do not perceive that any thing is signified besides the effect it self; for as to the manner of the action whereby it is produced, or the cause which produces it, these are not so much as aimed at.¹

104 Indeed, if we take a view of the several phenomena, and compare them together, we may observe some likeness and conformity between them. For example, in the falling of a stone to the ground, in the rising of the sea towards the moon, in cohesion and crystallization, there is something alike, namely an union or 20 mutual approach of bodies. So that any one of these or the like phenomena, may not seem strange or surprising to a man who hath nicely observed and compared the effects of Nature. For that only is thought so which is uncommon, or a thing by it self, and out of the ordinary course of our observation. That bodies should tend towards the centre of the earth, is not thought strange, because it is what we perceive every moment of our lives. But that they should have a like gravitation towards the centre of the moon, may seem odd and unaccountable to most men, because it is discerned only in the tides. But a philosopher, whose thoughts take in a larger 30 compass of Nature, having observed a certain similitude of appearances, as well in the heavens as the earth, that argue innumerable bodies to have a mutual tendency towards each other, which he

108 cohesion and crystallization—(A) cohesion, crystallization, etc.

¹ [The principle of attraction had early critics among the physicists themselves: Huygens and John Bernoulli, for example, pronounced it absurd, and so also did Newton (*Opera*, ed. Horsley, vol. IV, p. 438). The physicists recoiled from the idea of action at a distance, because of a mechanistic prejudice; Berkeley from a scientific description of facts that is framed as if it were an explanation of them. All we know, he says in effect, is that, and at what rate, bodies move towards each other—when they do, for, as he observes in Sect. 106, the phenomenon is not utterly universal. For him Nature, though on the whole regular, is contingent, and explicable only by final causes (Sect. 107).—Ed.]

denotes by the general name *attraction*, whatever can be reduced to that, he thinks justly accounted for. Thus he explains the tides by the attraction of the terraqueous globe towards the moon, which to him doth not appear odd or anomalous, but only a particular example of a general rule or law of Nature.

105 If therefore we consider the difference there is betwixt natural philosophers and other men, with regard to their knowledge of the phenomena, we shall find it consists, not in an exacter knowledge of the efficient cause that produces them, for that can be no other than the *will of a spirit*, but only in a greater largeness 10 of comprehension, whereby analogies, harmonies, and agreements are discovered in the works of Nature, and the particular effects explained, that is, reduced to general rules, see *Sect. 62*, which rules grounded on the analogy, and uniformness observed in the production of natural effects, are most agreeable, and sought after by the mind ; for that they extend our prospect beyond what is present, and near to us, and enable us to make very probable conjectures, touching things that may have happened at very great distances of time and place, as well as to predict things to come ; which sort of endeavour towards omniscience, is much affected by 20 the mind.

106 But we should proceed warily in such things : for we are apt to lay too great a stress on analogies, and to the prejudice of truth, humour that eagerness of the mind, whercby it is carried to extend its knowledge into general theorems. For example, gravitation, or mutual attraction, because it appears in many instances, some are straightway for pronouncing *universal* ; and that to *attract, and be attracted by every other body, is an essential quality inherent in all bodies whatsoever*. Whereas it appears the fixed stars have no such tendency towards each other : and so far is that 30 gravitation, from being *essential* to bodies, that, in some instances a quite contrary principle seems to shew it self : as in the perpendicular growth of plants, and the elasticity of the air. There is nothing necessary or essential in the case, but it depends entirely on the will of the *governing spirit*, who causes certain bodies to cleave together, or tend towards each other, according to various laws, whilst he keeps others at a fixed distance ; and to some he gives a quite contrary tendency to fly asunder, just as he sees convenient.

107 After what has been premised, I think we may lay down 40
 l 26 *gravitation*—(A) *in the business of gravitation*. t 27 *pronouncing*—(A) *pronoun-
 cing it*. t 29 *it appears*—(A) *its evident*.

the following conclusions. First, it is plain philosophers amuse themselves in vain, when they inquire for any natural efficient cause, distinct from a *mind* or *spirit*. Secondly, considering the whole creation is the workmanship of a *wise and good agent*, it should seem to become philosophers, to employ their thoughts (contrary to what some hold) about the final causes of things :¹ and I must confess, I see no reason, why pointing out the various ends, to which natural things are adapted, and for which they were originally with unspeakable wisdom contrived, should not be
 10 thought one good way of accounting for them, and altogether worthy a philosopher. Thirdly, from what hath been premised no reason can be drawn, why the history of Nature should not still be studied, and observations and experiments made, which, that they are of use to mankind, and enable us to draw any general conclusions, is not the result of any immutable habitudes, or relations between things themselves, but only of God's goodness and kindness to men in the administration of the world. See Sect. 30 and 31. Fourthly, by a diligent observation of the phenomena within our view, we may discover the general laws of Nature, and
 20 from them deduce the other phenomena, I do not say *demonstrate* ; for all deductions of that kind depend on a supposition that the Author of Nature always operates uniformly, and in a constant observance of those rules we take for principles : which we cannot evidently know.

108² Those men who frame general rules from the phenomena, and afterwards derive the phenomena from those rules, seem to

16 things—(4) things : for besides that this wo'd prove a very pleasing entertainment to the mind, it might be of great advantage, in that it not only discovers to us the attributes of the Creator, but may also direct us in several instances to the proper uses and applications of things ; and I must confess. . . . 17 And I must confess worthy a philosopher (not in MS.). 124 evidently—(MS.) certainly. 125 (A begins) It appears from Sect. LXVI, etc. that the steady, consistent methods of Nature, may not unfitly be stiled the language of its Author, whereby He discovers His attributes to our view, and directs us how to act for the convenience and felicity of life. And to me, those men

¹ [Final causes were excluded by Descartes (*Principia*, I xxviii), Spinoza (*Ethica*, I, appendix), and, of course, by the new physicists, though Newton, in the *Scholium Generale* appended to Bk. III of the second edition of his *Principia* (1713), not only affirms that the general order of the physical universe cannot be explained mechanistically, but goes on to consider final causes, and concludes with the startling sentence, 'And thus much concerning God ; to discourse of whom from the appearances of things, does certainly belong to Natural Philosophy.'—Ed.] ² [The expressions in the text of the first edition about a 'language of Nature' hark back to Sect. 44.—Ed.]

consider signs rather than causes. A man may well understand natural signs without knowing their analogy, or being able to say by what rule a thing is so or so. And as it is very possible to write improperly, through too strict an observance of general grammar-rules : so in arguing from general rules of Nature, it is not impossible we may extend the analogy too far, and by that means run into mistakes.

109 As in reading other books, a wise man will choose to fix his thoughts on the sense and apply it to use, rather than lay them out in grammatical remarks on the language ; so in perusing the 10 volume of Nature, it seems beneath the dignity of the mind to affect an exactness in reducing each particular phenomenon to general rules, or shewing how it follows from them. We should propose to our selves nobler views, such as to recreate and exalt the mind, with a prospect of the beauty, order, extent, and variety of natural things : hence, by proper inferences, to enlarge our notions of the grandeur, wisdom, and beneficence of the Creator : and lastly, to make the several parts of the Creation, so far as in us lies, subservient to the ends they were designed for, God's glory, and the sustentation and comfort of our selves and fellow-creatures. 20

110 The best key for the aforesaid analogy, or natural science, will be easily acknowledged to be a certain celebrated treatise of *mechanics*¹ : in the entrance of which justly admired treatise, time, space and motion, are distinguished into *absolute* and *relative*, *true* and *apparent*, *mathematical* and *vulgar* : which distinction, as it is at large explained by the author, doth suppose those quantities to have an existence without the mind : and that

l 1 consider signs rather than causes . . . analogy—(A) be grammarians, and their art the grammar of Nature. Two ways there are of learning a language, either by rule or by practice : a man may be well read in the language of Nature, without understanding the grammar of it—(MS. omits Two ways . . . practice). l 5 rules—(A) laws. l 6 extend—(A) stretch. l 8 (A begins) To carry on the resemblance, as in reading . . . l 11 it seems—(A) methinks it is. l 14 such as—(A) namely. l 21 The best key . . . treatise—(A) The best grammar of the kind we are speaking of, will be easily acknowledg'd to be a treatise of mechanics, demonstrated and applied to Nature, by a philosopher of a neighbouring nation whom all the world admire. I shall not take upon me to make remarks, on the performance of that extraordinary person : only some things he has advanced, so directly opposite to the doctrine we have hitherto laid down, that we shou'd be wanting, in the regard due to the authority of so great a man, did we not take some notice of them. In the entrance of that justly admired treatise. . . .

¹ [The *Principia* of Sir Isaac Newton (1687), whom Berkeley, when he was writing and publishing in Dublin, properly described as 'of a neighbouring nation.' On the preceding and following Sections see Berkeley's *De Motu* (1721).—Ed.]

they are ordinarily conceived with relation to sensible things, to which nevertheless in their own nature, they bear no relation at all.

111 As for *time*, as it is there taken in an absolute or abstracted sense, for the duration or perseverance of the existence of things, I have nothing more to add concerning it, after what hath been already said on that subject, *Sect. 97 and 98*. For the rest, this celebrated author holds there is an *absolute space*, which, being unperceivable to sense, remains in it self similar and immoveable : 10 and relative space to be the measure thereof, which being moveable, and defined by its situation in respect of sensible bodies, is vulgarly taken for immoveable space. *Place* he defines to be that part of space which is occupied by any body. And according as the space is absolute or relative, so also is the place. *Absolute motion* is said to be the translation of a body from absolute place to absolute place, as relative motion is from one relative place to another. And because the parts of absolute space, do not fall under our senscs, instead of them we are obliged to use their sensible measures : and so define both place and motion with 20 respect to bodies, which we regard as immoveable. But it is said, in philosophical matters we must abstract from our senses, since it may be, that none of those bodies which seem to be quiescent, are truly so : and the same thing which is moved relatively, may be really at rest. As likewise one and the same body may be in relative rest and motion, or even moved with contrary relativc motions at the same time, according as its place is variously defined. All which ambiguity is to be found in the apparent motions, but not at all in the true or absolute, which should therefore be alone regarded in philosophy. And the true, we are told, 30 are distinguished from apparent or relative motions by the following properties. First, in true or absolute motion, all parts which prserve the same position with respect to the whole, partake of the motions of the whole. Secondly, the place being moved, that which is placed therein is also moved : so that a body moving in a place which is in motion, doth participate the motion of its place. Thirdly, true motion is never generated or changed, otherwise than by force impressed on the body it self. Fourthly, true motion is always changed by force impressed on the body moved. Fifthly, in circular motion barely relative, there is no centrifugal 40 force, which nevertheless in that which is true or absolute, is proportional to the quantity of motion.

l 17 *And because—(A) Now because. l 37 than—(A) then.*

112 But notwithstanding what hath been said, it doth not appear to me, that there can be any motion other than *relative* : so that to conceive motion, there must be at least conceived two bodies, whereof the distance or position in regard to each other is varied. Hence if there was one only body in being, it could not possibly be moved. This seems evident, in that the idea I have of motion doth necessarily include relation.

113 But though in every motion it be necessary to conceive more bodies than one, yet it may be that one only is moved, namely that on which the force causing the change of distance is 10 impressed, or in other words, that to which the action is applied. For however some may define relative motion, so as to term that body *moved*, which changes its distance from some other body, whether the force or action causing that change were applied to it, or no : yet as relative motion is that which is perceived by sense, and regarded in the ordinary affairs of life, it should seem that every man of common sense knows what it is, as well as the best philosopher : now I ask any one, whether in his sense of motion as he walks along the streets, the stones he passes over may be said to *move*, because they change distance with his feet ? To 20 me it seems, that though motion includes a relation of one thing to another, yet it is not necessary that each term of the relation be denominated from it. As a man may think of somewhat which doth not think, so a body may be moved to or from another body, which is not therefore it self in motion.

114 As the placee happens to be variously defined, the motion which is related to it varies. A man in a ship may be said to be quiescent, with relation to the sides of the vessel, and yet move with relation to the land. Or he may move eastward in respect of the one, and westward in respect of the other. In the common 30 affairs of life, men never go beyond the earth to define the placee

l 1 it doth not—(A) I must confess, it does not. l 6 This seems evident—(A) This to me seems very evident. l 7 include relation—(A) involve relation in it. Whether others can conceive it otherwise, a little attention may satisfy them. l 10 change of distance . . . is applied—(A) change, in the distance or situation of the bodies, is impressed. l 14 or action—(B only). applied to—(A) impressed on. l 15 Yet as—(A) Yet I can't assent to this, for since we are told. l 16 should seem—(A) follows. l 21 seems—(A) appears, though motion . . . yet—(MS.) motion and thought have this alike in them, viz. that as they both include a relation of one thing to another, so. l 25 in motion—(A) in motion, I mean relative motion, for other I am not able to conceive—(MS. further adds) It may not be amiss to observe that sometimes tho' we perceive the distance betwixt two bodies to change, yet we do not know to which of them the motion ought to be attributed, because we cannot perceive on which the moving force was impressed.

of any body : and what is quiescent in respect of that, is accounted *absolutely* to be so. But philosophers who have a greater extcnt of thought, and juster notions of the system of things, discover even the earth it self to be moved. In order therefore to fix their notions, they seem to conceive the corporeal world as finite, and the utmost unmoved walls or shell thereof to be the place, whereby they estimate true motions. If we sound our own conceptions, I believe we may find all the absolute motion we can frame an idea of, to be at bottom no other than relative motion thus defined. For as ¹⁰ hath been already observed, absolute motion exclusive of all external relation is incomprehensible : and to this kind of relative motion, all the above-mentioned properties, causes, and effects ascribed to absolute motion, will, if I mistake not, be found to agree. As to what is said of the centrifugal force, that it doth not at all belong to circular relative motion : I do not see how this follows from the experiment which is brought to prove it.¹ See *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica, in Schol. Def. VIII.* For the water in the vessel, at that time wherein it is said to have the greatest relative circular motion, hath, I think, no motion at ²⁰ all : as is plain from the foregoing section.

¹¹⁵ For to denominate a body *moved*, it is requisite, first, that it change its distance or situation with regard to some other body : and secondly, that the force or action occasioning that change be applied to it. If either of these be wanting, I do not think that agreeably to the sense of mankind, or the propriety of language, a body can be said to be in motion. I grant indeed, that it is possible for us to think a body, which we see change its distance from some other, to be moved, though it have no force applied to it (in which sense there may be apparent motion), but then it is, ³⁰ because the force causing the change of distance, is imagined by us to be applied or impressed on that body thought to move. Which indeed shews we are capable of mistaking a thing to be in motion which is not, and that is all.

¹ [The experiment of the rotating bucket, on which see James Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism* (1899), vol. I, pp. 73ff.—Ed.]

^{l 10} hath been already observed—(A) I have already said. ^{l 17} *Mathematica*—(A) *Mathematica*, p. 9. ^{l 21} (MS. omits this Section.) ^{l 23} And secondly . . . to it—(A) Secondly, that the force occasioning that change be impressed on it. ^{l 28} applied to—(A) impressed on. ^{l 31} applied or (B only). ^{l 33} and that is all—(A) but does not prove that, in the common acceptation of motion, a body is moved merely because it changes distance from another; since as soon as we are undeceiv'd, and find that the moving force was not communicated to it, we no longer hold it to be moved.

116 From what hath been said, it follows that the philosophic consideration of motion doth not imply the being of an *absolute space*, distinct from that which is perceived by sense, and related to bodies : which that it cannot exist without the mind, is clear upon the same principles, that demonstrate the like of all other objects of sense. And perhaps, if we inquire narrowly, we shall find we cannot even frame an idea of *pure space*, exclusive of all body. This I must confess seems impossible, as being a most abstract idea. When I excite a motion in some part of my body,¹ if it be free or without resistance, I say there is *space* : but if I find a resistance, then I say there is *body* : and in proportion as the resistance to motion is lesser or greater, I say the *space* is more or less *pure*. So that when I speak of pure or empty space, it is not to be supposed, that the word *space* stands for an idea distinct from, or conceivable without body and motion. Though indeed we are apt to think every noun substantive stands for a distinct idea, that may be separated from all others : which hath occasioned infinite mistakes. When therefore supposing all the world to be annihilated besides my own body, I say there still remains *pure space* : therby nothing else is meant, but only that I conceive it possible, for the limbs of my body to be moved on all sides without the least resistance : but if that too were annihilated, then there could be no motion, and consequently no space. Some perhaps may think the sense of seeing doth furnish them with the idea of pure space ; but it is plain from what we have elsewhere shewn, that the ideas of space and distance are not obtained by that sense. See the *Essay concerning Vision*.

117 What is here laid down, seems to put an end to all those disputes and difficulties, which have sprung up amongst the
 116 narrowly—(A) narrowly into the matter. 118 seems impossible—(A) is above my capacity. 119 which—(A) that.

¹ [In asserting here, in Sect. 147, and in the *Three Dialogues* (below, p. 237), that finite spirits have power over the 'ideas' that constitute their own bodies, Berkeley was ranging himself against Malebranche's thoroughgoing occasionalism (*Recherche*, VI ii 4, *Eclaircissement*). See below, p. 154.—Ed.]

So on the other hand, when one only body (the parts whereof preserve a given position between themselves) is imagin'd to exist ; some there are who think that it can be moved all manner of ways, tho' without any change of distance or situation to any other bodies ; which we shou'd not deny, if they meant only that it might have an impressed force, which, upon the bare creation of other bodies, wou'd produce a motion of some certain quantity and determination. But that an actual motion (distinct from the impressed force, or power productive of change of place in case there were bodies present whereby to define it) can exist in such a single body, I must confess I am not able to comprehend.

learned concerning the nature of *pure space*. But the chief advantage arising from it, is, that we are freed from that dangerous *dilemma*, to which several who have employed their thoughts on this subject, imagine themselves reduced, to wit, of thinking either that real space is God, or else that there is something beside God which is eternal, uncreated, infinite, indivisible, immutable.¹ Both which may justly be thought pernicious and absurd notions. It is certain that not a few divines, as well as philosophers of great note, have, from the difficulty they found in conceiving either limits or 10 annihilation of space, concluded it must be *divine*. And some of late have set themselves particularly to shew, that the incommutable attributes of God agree to it. Which doctrine, how unworthy soever it may seem of the Divine Nature, yet I do not see how we can get clear of it, so long as we adhere to the received opinions.

118 Hitherto of natural philosophy : we come now to make some inquiry concerning that other great branch of speculative knowledge, to wit, *mathematics*. These, how celebrated soever they may be, for their clearness and certainty of demonstration, which 20 is hardly any where else to be found, cannot nevertheless be supposed altogether free from mistakes ; if in their principles there lurks some secret error, which is common to the professors of those sciences with the rest of mankind. Mathematicians, though they deduce their theorems from a great height of evidence, yet their first principles are limited by the consideration of quantity : and they do not ascend into any inquiry concerning those transcendental maxims, which influence all the particular sciences, each

14 this—(A) that. 16 immutable—(A) immutable, etc. 111 that (B only). 113 yet I—(A) yet I must confess I. 121 if in—(A) if so be that in.

¹ [Whom Berkeley had in mind is evident from entry 298 of the *Philos. Commentaries* : 'Locke, More, Raphson, etc. seem to make God extended.' Locke had only refused to reduce space to a relation among bodies—it is a reality independent of body (*Essay*, II xiii 27). In *Essay*, II xv 4, he seems to deny that it is an attribute of God ; but II xv 8 implies the opposite. More, also against the Cartesians, defended the reality of space apart from body, and emphasized the quasi-divine character of it, as infinite, eternal, etc. Joseph Raphson (*De Spatio Reali, sive Ente Infinito*, 1697) goes further, declaring this infinite to be an attribute of the First Cause ; and so also does Samuel Clarke in his *Discourse concerning the Being and Attributes of God* (1705-6). For Spinoza extension is an attribute of God (*Ethica*, I, Prop. xiv, coroll. ii). Newton himself, stepping out of his science and standing with More, spoke of space as God's 'sensory' (*Optics*, 1704, III, query 28). The expression 'sensuum Dei' had been used by Goclenius. Cf. Johnson's letter to Berkeley, below, pp. 286 f.).—Ed.]

part whereof, mathematics not excepted, doth consequently participate of the errors involved in them.¹ That the principles laid down by mathematicians are true, and their way of deduction from those principles clear and incontestable, we do not deny. But we hold, there may be certain erroneous maxims of greater extent than the object of mathematics, and for that reason not expressly mentioned, though tacitly supposed throughout the whole progress of that science ; and that the ill effects of those secret unexamined errors are diffused through all the branches thereof. To be plain, we suspect the mathematicians are, as well ¹⁰ as other men, concerned in the errors arising from the doctrine of abstract general ideas, and the existence of objects without the mind.

119 *Arithmetic* hath been thought to have for its object abstract ideas of *number*. Of which to understand the properties and mutual habitudes is supposed no mean part of speculative knowledge. The opinion of the pure and intellectual nature of numbers in abstract, hath made them in esteem with those philosophers, who seem to have affected an uncommon fineness and elevation of thought. It hath set a price on the most trifling numerical ²⁰ speculations which in practice are of no use, but serve only for amusement : and hath therefore so far infected the minds of some, that they have dreamt of mighty *mysteries* involved in numbers, and attempted the explication of natural things by them. But if we inquire into our own thoughts, and consider what

l 5 maxims—(*MS.*) *notions.* *l 10 as well . . . concerned*—(*A.*) *no less deeply concerned than other men.* *l 25 if we inquire*—(*A.*) *if we narrowly inquire.*

¹ [Note Berkeley's clear sense of the nature of strictly philosophical criticism. In his *Analyst* (§ 50) he refers back to these sections of the *Principles* as 'hints' or 'suggestions', which after a lapse of some twenty-five years he was now undertaking to expand. His culminating charge there against the 'infidel mathematician' is 'that your inferences are no more just than your conceptions are clear, and that your logics are as exceptionable as your metaphysics' (§ 49). His own position is that an abstract 'idea' of quantity, whether as number or as extension, is impossible ; that arithmetic is concerned directly with arbitrary signs or symbols, and indirectly with particular things ; that geometrical thinking, while *ignoring* particularities for the purpose of general demonstration, can never have before it an object that is free from the determinations of sense ; and that neither science can study its symbols or semi-abstractions for their own sake without dissipating itself in both futile subtleties and false problems. Besides the *Analyst* see *Defence of Free-thinking, Reasons for not Replying to Mr. Walton*, and the early essay *Of Infinites*. Berkeley's rejection of infinitesimals follows from his axiom 'esse is percipi,' but may have been influenced by Bayle (art. 'Zenon,' Note F), who is mentioned in the *Philos. Commentaries* (entries 358 and 424).—Ed.]

hath been premised, we may perhaps entertain a low opinion of those high flights and abstractions, and look on all inquiries about numbers, only as so many *difficiles nuga*, so far as they are not subservient to practice, and promote the benefit of life.

120 Unity in abstract we have before considered in *Sect. 13*, from which and what hath been said in the Introduction, it plainly follows there is not any such idea. But number being defined a *collection of units*, we may conclude that, if there be no such thing as unity or unit in abstract, there are no ideas of number in abstract denoted by the numerical names and figures. The theories therefore in arithmetic, if they are abstracted from the names and figures, as likewise from all use and practice, as well as from the particular things numbered, can be supposed to have nothing at all for their object. Hence we may see, how entirely the science of numbers is subordinate to practice, and how jejune and trifling it becomes, when considered as a matter of mere speculation.

121 However since there may be some, who, deluded by the spacious shew of discovering abstracted verities, waste their time 20 in arithmetical theorems and problems, which have not any use: it will not be amiss, if we more fully consider, and expose the vanity of that pretence; and this will plainly appear, by taking a view of arithmetic in its infancy, and observing what it was that originally put men on the study of that science, and to what scope they directed it. It is natural to think that at first, men, for ease of memory and help of computation, made use of counters, or in writing of single strokes, points or the like, each whereof was made to signify an unit, that is, some one thing of whatever kind they had occasion to reckon. Afterwards they found out the more 30 compendious ways, of making one character stand in place of several strokes, or points. And lastly, the notation of the Arabians or Indians came into use, wherein by the repetition of a few characters or figures, and varying the signification of each figure according to the place it obtains, all numbers may be most aptly expressed: which seems to have been done in imitation of language, so that an exact analogy is observed betwixt the notation by figures and names, the nine simple figures answering the nine first numeral names and places in the former, corresponding to denominations in the latter. And agreeably to those conditions 40 of the simple and local value of figures, were contrived methods of finding from the given figures or marks of the parts, what figures
l 5 in Sect.—(A) vid. Sect.

and how placed, are proper to denote the whole or *vice versa*. And having found the sought figures, the same rule or analogy being observed throughout, it is easy to read them into words ; and so the number becomes perfectly known. For then the number of any particular things is said to be known, when we know the name or figures (with their due arrangement) that according to the standing analogy belong to them. For these signs being known, we can by the operations of arithmetic, know the signs of any part of the particular sums signified by them ; and thus computing in signs (because of the connexion established betwixt them and the distinct multitudes of things, wherof one is taken for an unit), we may be able rightly to sum up, divide, and proportion the things themselves that we intend to number.

122 In *arithmetic* therefore we regard not the *things* but the *signs*, which nevertheless are not regarded for their own sake, but because they direct us how to act with relation to things, and dispose rightly of them. Now agreeably to what we have before observed, of words in general (*Sect. 19. Introd.*) it happens here likewise, that abstract ideas are thought to be signified by numeral names or characters, while they do not suggest ideas of particular things to our minds. I shall not at present enter into a more particular dissertation on this subject ; but only observe that it is evident from what hath been said, those things which pass for abstract truths and theorems concerning numbers, are, in reality, conversant about no object distinct from particular numerable things, except only names and characters ; which originally came to be considered, on no other account but their being *signs*, or capable to represent aptly, whatever particular things men had need to compute. Whence it follows, that to study them for their own sake would be just as wise, and to as good purpose, as if a man, 30 neglecting the true use or original intention and subserviency of language, should spend his time in impertinent criticisms upon words, or reasonings and controversies purely verbal.

123 From numbers we proceed to speak of *extension*, which considered as relative, is the object of geometry.¹ The *infinite* divisibility of *finite* extension, though it is not expressly laid down, either as an axiom or theorem in the elements of that science,

118 *Sect.*—(A) *vid. Sect. 121 I shall not . . . subject*—(MS.) *I may perhaps hereafter find an opportunity to treat of this subject more at large. 135 considered as relative (B only).*

¹ [Berkeley's empirical reading of geometry is closely followed in J. S. Mill's *System of Logic*, II v 1.—Ed.]

yet is throughout the same every where supposed, and thought to have so inseparable and essential a connexion with the principles and demonstrations in geometry, that mathematicians never admit it into doubt, or make the least question of it. And as this notion is the source from whence do spring all those amusing geometrical paradoxes, which have such a direct repugnancy to the plain common sense of mankind, and are admitted with so much reluctance into a mind not yet debauched by learning: so is it the principal occasion of all that nice and extreme subtlety, which 10 renders the study of *mathematics* so difficult and tedious. Hence if we can make it appear, that no finite extension contains innumerable parts, or is infinitely divisible, it follows that we shall at once clear the science of geometry from a great number of difficulties and contradictions, which have ever been esteemed a reproach to human reason, and withal make the attainment thereof a business of much less time and pains, than it hitherto hath been.

124 Every particular finite extension, which may possibly be the object of our thought, is an *idea* existing only in the mind, and consequently each part thereof must be perceived. If therefore 20 I cannot perceive innumerable parts in any finite extension that I consider, it is certain they are not contained in it: but it is evident, that I cannot distinguish innumerable parts in any particular line, surface, or solid, which I either perceive by sense, or figure to my self in my mind: wherefore I conclude they are not contained in it. Nothing can be plainer to me, than that the extensions I have in view are no other than my own ideas, and it is no less plain, that I cannot resolve any one of my ideas into an infinite number of other ideas, that is, that they are not infinitely divisible. If by *finite extension* be meant something distinct from a 30 finite idea, I declare I do not know what that is, and so cannot affirm or deny any thing of it. But if the terms *extension*, *parts*, and the like, are taken in any sense conceivable, that is, for ideas; then to say a finite quantity or extension consists of parts infinite in number, is so manifest a contradiction, that every one at first sight acknowledges it to be so. And it is impossible it should ever gain the assent of any reasonable creature, who is not brought to it by gentle and slow degrees, as a converted Gentile to the belief of *transubstantiation*. Ancient and rooted prejudices do often pass into principles: and those propositions which once obtain the 40 force and credit of a *principle*, are not only themselves, but likewise

l 10 so difficult—(A) so very difficult. l 32 and the like—(A) etc. l 37 converted Gentile—(A) pagan convert.

whatever is deducible from them, thought privileged from all examination. And there is no absurdity so gross, which by this means the mind of man may not be prepared to swallow.

125 He whose understanding is prepossessed with the doctrine of abstract general ideas, may be persuaded, that (whatever be thought of the ideas of sense), extension in *abstract* is infinitely divisible. And one who thinks the objects of sense exist without the mind, will perhaps in virtue thereof be brought to admit, that a line but an inch long may contain innumerable parts really existing, though too small to be discerned. These errors are grafted ¹⁰ as well in the minds of *geometrical* men, and have a like influence on their reasonings ; and it were no difficult thing, to shew how the arguments from geometry made use of to support the infinite divisibility of extension, are bottomed on them. At present we shall only observe in general, whence it is that the mathematicians are all so fond and tenacious of this doctrine.

126 It hath been observed in another place, that the theorems and demonstrations in geometry are conversant about universal ideas. *Sect. 15. Introd.* Where it is explained in what sense this ²⁰ ought to be understood, to wit, that the particular lines and figures included in the diagram, are supposed to stand for innumerable others of different sizes : or in other words, the geometer considers them abstracting from their magnitude : which doth not imply that he forms an abstract idea, but only that he cares not what the particular magnitude is, whether great or small, but looks on that as a thing indifferent to the demonstration : hence it follows, that a line in the scheme, but an inch long, must be spoken of, as though it contained ten thousand parts, since it is regarded not in it self, but as it is universal ; and it is universal only in its ³⁰ signification, whereby it represents innumerable lines greater than it self, in which may be distinguished ten thousand parts or more, though there may not be above an inch in it. After this manner the properties of the lines signified are (by a very usual figure) transferred to the sign, and thence through mistake thought to appertain to it considered in its own nature.

l 5 abstract general ideas—(MS.) abstract notions. persuaded—(A) easily persuaded. l 7 one—(A) any one. l 8 perhaps . . . that—(A) not stick to affirm. l 14 on them—(A) on them. But this, if it be thought necessary, we may hereafter find a proper place to treat of in a particular manner. l 16 that (B only). l 17 this—(A) that. l 20 Sect.—(A) Vid. Sect. l 21 to wit, that—(A) namely. l 33 be above an inch (B only).

127 Because there is no number of parts so great, but it is possible there may be a line containing more, the inch-line is said to contain parts more than any assignable number ; which is true, not of the inch taken absolutely, but only for the things signified by it. But men not retaining that distinction in their thoughts, slide into a belief that the small particular line described on paper contains in it self parts innumerable. There is no such thing as the ten-thousandth part of an *inch* ; but there is of a *mile* or *diameter of the earth*, which may be signified by that inch. When therefore I delineate a triangle on paper, and take one side not above an inch, for example, in length to be the *radius* : this I consider as divided into ten thousand or an hundred thousand parts, or more. For though the ten-thousandth part of that line considered in it self, is nothing at all, and consequently may be neglected without any error or inconveniency ; yet these described lines being only marks standing for greater quantities, whereof it may be the ten-thousandth part is very considerable, it follows, that to prevent notable errors in practice, the *radius* must be taken of ten thousand parts, or more.

128 From what hath been said the reason is plain why, to the end any theorem may become universal in its use, it is necessary we speak of the lines described on paper, as though they contained parts which really they do not. In doing of which, if we examine the matter throughly, we shall perhaps discover that we cannot conceive an inch it self as consisting of, or being divisible into a thousand parts, but only some other line which is far greater than an inch, and represented by it. And that when we say a line is *infinitely divisible*, we must mean a line which is *infinitely great*. What we have here observed seems to be the chief cause, why to suppose the infinite divisibility of finite extension hath been thought necessary in geometry.

129 The several absurdities and contradictions which flowed from this false principle might, one would think, have been esteemed so many demonstrations against it. But by I know not what *logic*, it is held that proofs *à posteriori* are not to be admitted against propositions relating to infinity. As though it were not impossible even for an infinite mind to reconcile contradictions. Or as if any thing absurd and repugnant could have a necessary connexion with truth, or flow from it. But whoever considers the weakness of this pretence, will think it was contrived on purpose

128 we must mean—(A) we mean (if we mean any thing). 132 (In MS. all this Section is on the facing page reserved for additions and corrections.)

to humour the laziness of the mind, which had rather acquiesce in an indolent scepticism, than be at the pains to go through with a severe examination of those principles it hath ever embraccd for true.

130 Of late the speculations about infinites have run so high, and grown to such strange notions, as have occasioned no small scruples and disputes among the geometers of the present age. Some there are of great note, who not content with holding that finite lines may be divided into an infinite number of parts, do yet farther maintain, that each of those infinitesimals is it self subdivisble into an infinity of other parts, or infinitesimals of a second order, and so on *ad infinitum*. These, I say, assert there are infinitesimals of infinitesimals of infinitesimals, without eves coming to an end. So that according to them an inch doth not barely contain an infinite number of parts, but an infinity of an infinity of an infinity *ad infinitum* of parts. Others there be who hold all orders of infinitesimals below the first to be nothing at all, thinking it with good reason absurd, to imagine there is any positive quantity or part of extension, which though multiplied infinitely, can ever equal the smallest given extension. And yet on the other hand it 20 seems no less absurd, to think the square, cube, or other power of a positive real root, should it self be nothing at all ; which they who hold infinitesimals of the first order, denying all of the subsequent orders, are obliged to maintain.

131 Have we not therefore reason to conclude, that they are *both* in the wrong, and that there is in effect no such thing as parts infinitely small, or an infinite number of parts contained in any finite quantity ? But you will say, that if this doctrine obtains, it will follow the very foundations of geometry are destroyed : and those great men who have raised that science to so astonishing an 30 height, have been all the while building a castle in the air. To this it may be replied, that whatever is useful in geometry and promotes the benefit of human life, doth still remain firm and unshaken on our principles. That science considered as practical, will rather receive advantage than any prejudice from what hath been said. But to set this in a due light, may be the subject of a distinct inquiry. For the rest, though it should follow that some of the more intricate and subtle parts of *speculative mathematics* may be pared off without any prejudice to truth ; yet I do not see what damage will be thence derived to mankind. On the con- 40

l 13 infinitesimals, without—(A) infinitesimals, etc. without. l 19 ever—(A) never.
l 36 subject of a distinct inquiry—(A) proper business of another place.

trary, it were highly to be wished, that men of great abilities and obstinate application would draw off their thoughts from those amusements, and employ them in the study of such things as lie nearer the concerns of life, or have a more direct influence on the manners.

132 If it be said that several theorems undoubtedly true, are discovered by methods in which infinitesimals are made use of, which could never have been, if their existence included a contradiction in it. I answer, that upon a thorough examination it will not be found, that in any instance it is necessary to make use of or conceive infinitesimal parts of finite lines, or even quantities less than the *minimum sensibile*: nay, it will be evident this is never done, it being impossible.

133 By what we have premised, it is plain that very numerous and important errors have taken their rise from those false principles, which were impugned in the foregoing parts of this treatise. And the opposites of those erroneous tenets at the same time appear to be most fruitful principles, from whence do flow innumerable consequences highly advantageous to true philosophy as well as to religion. Particularly, *matter or the absolute existence of corporeal objects*, hath been shewn to be that wherein the most avowed and pernicious enemies of all knowledge, whether human or divine, have ever placed their chief strength and confidence. And surely, if by distinguishing the real existence of unthinking things from their being perceived, and allowing them a subsistence of their own out of the minds of spirits, no one thing is explained in Nature; but on the contrary a great many inexplicable difficulties arise: if the supposition of matter is barely precarious, as not being grounded on so much as one single reason: if its consequences cannot endure the light of examination and free inquiry, but screen themselves under the dark and general pretence of *infinites being incomprehensible*: if withal the removal of this *matter* be not attended with the least evil consequence, if it be not even

11 *it were*—(A) *I think it were*. *great abilities and obstinate*—(A) *the greatest abilities and most obstinate*. 16 (MS. omits this Section.) 113 *impossible*—(A) *impossible*. And whatever mathematicians may think of fluxions or the differential calculus and the like, a little reflexion will shew them, that in working by those methods, they do not conceive or imagine lines or surfaces less than what are perceptible to sense. They may, indeed, call those little and almost insensible quantities infinitesimals or infinitesimals of infinitesimals, if they please: but at bottom this is all, they being in truth finite, nor does the solution of problemes require the supposing any other. But this will be more clearly made out hereafter. 114 *premised*—(A) *hitherto said*.

missed in the world, but every thing as well, nay much easier conceived without it : if lastly, both *sceptics* and *atheists* are for ever silenced upon supposing only spirits and ideas, and this scheme of things is perfectly agreeable both to *reason* and *religion* : methinks we may expect it should be admitted and firmly embraced, though it were proposed only as an *hypothesis*, and the existence of matter had been allowed possible, which yet I think we have evidently demonstrated that it is not.

134 True it is, that in consequence of the foregoing principles, several disputes and speculations, which are esteemed no mean parts of learning, are rejected as useless. But how great a prejudice soever against our notions, this may give to those who have already been deeply engaged, and made large advances in studies of that nature : yet by others, we hope it will not be thought any just ground of dislike to the principles and tenets herein laid down, that they abridge the labour of study, and make human sciences more clear, compendious, and attainable, than they were before.

135 Having dispatched what we intended to say concerning the knowledge of *ideas*, the method we proposed leads us, in the next place, to treat of *spirits*. with regard to which, perhaps human knowledge is not so deficient as is vulgarly imagined. The great reason that is assigned for our being thought ignorant of the nature of spirits, is, our not having an idea of it.¹ But surely it ought not to be looked on as a defect in a human understanding, that it does not perceive the idea of *spirit*, if it is manifestly impossible there should be any such *idea*. And this, if I mistake not, has been demonstrated in Sect. 27 : to which I shall here add that a spirit has been shown to be the only substance or support, wherein the unthinking beings or ideas can exist : but that this *substance* which supports or perceives ideas should it self be an *idea* or like an *idea*, is evidently absurd.

136 It will perhaps be said, that we want a sense (as some have imagined)² proper to know substances withal, which if we had, we might know our own soul, as we do a triangle. To this I answer, that in case we had a new sense bestowed upon us, we could only receive thereby some new sensations of ideas of sense.

l 2 lastly—(A) in fine. l 11 useless—(A) useless, and in effect conversant about nothing at all. l 17 more clear—(A) far more clear. l 30 the (B only).

¹ [Malebranche, *Recherche*, III ii 7 § iv. Locke may have had Malebranche in view when he urged that we have as good a knowledge of mind as of body (*Essay*, II xxiii 22).—Ed.] ² [See note on Sect. 77.—Ed.]

But I believe no body will say, that what he means by the terms *soul* and *substance*, is only some particular sort of idea or sensation. We may therefore infer, that all things duly considered, it is not more reasonable to think our faculties defective, in that they do not furnish us with an idea of spirit or active thinking substance, than it would be if we should blame them for not being able to comprehend a *round square*.

137 From the opinion that spirits are to be known after the manner of an idea or sensation, have risen many absurd and 10 heterodox tenets, and much scepticism about the nature of the soul. It is even probable, that this opinion may have produced a doubt in some, whether they had any soul at all distinct from their body, since upon inquiry they could not find they had an idea of it. That an *idea* which is inactive, and the existence whereof consists in being perceived, should be the image or likeness of an agent subsisting by it self, seems to need no other refutation, than barely attending to what is meant by those words. But perhaps you will say, that though an *idea* cannot resemble a *spirit*, in its thinking, acting, or subsisting by it self, yet it may in some 20 other respects: and it is not necessary that an idea or image be in all respects like the original.

138 I answer, if it does not in those mentioned, it is impossible it should represent it in any other thing. Do but leave out the power of willing, thinking, and perceiving ideas, and there remains nothing else wherein the idea can be like a spirit. For by the word *spirit* we mean only that which thinks, wills, and perceives; this, and this alone, constitutes the signification of that term. If therefore it is impossible that any degree of those powers should be represented in an idea, it is evident there can be no idea 30 of a spirit.

139 But it will be objected, that if there is no idea signified by the terms *soul*, *spirit*, and *substance*, they are wholly insignificant, or have no meaning in them. I answer, those words do mean or signify a real thing, which is neither an idea nor like an idea, but that which perceives ideas, and wills, and reasons about them. What I am my self, that which I denote by the term I, is the same

l 29 *an idea—(A) an idea or notion. no idea—(A) no idea or notion.* l 30 (MS. adds to Section) *Again the soul is without composition of parts, one pure simple undivided being. Whatever distinction of faculties or parts we may conceive in it arises only from its various acts or operations about ideas. Hence it is repugnant that it should be known or represented in some parts and not in others, or that there should be an idea, which incompletely resembles it.* l 32 *and substance—(MS. omits).*

with what is meant by *soul* or *spiritual substance*. If it be said that this is only quarrelling at a word, and that since the immediate significations of other names are by common consent called *ideas*, no reason can be assigned, why that which is signified by the name *spirit* or *soul* may not partake in the same appellation. I answer, all the unthinking objects of the mind agree, in that they are entirely passive, and their existence consists only in being perceived: whereas a soul or spirit is an active being, whose existence consists not in being perceived, but in perceiving ideas and thinking. It is therefore necessary, in order to prevent equivocation 10 and confounding natures perfectly disagreeing and unlike, that we distinguish between *spirit* and *idea*. See Sect. 27.

140 In a large sense indeed, we may be said to have an idea, or rather a notion¹ of *spirit*, that is, we understand the meaning of the word, otherwise we could not affirm or deny any thing of it. Moreover, as we conceive the ideas that are in the minds of other spirits by means of our own, which we suppose to be resemblances of them: so we know other spirits by means of our own soul, which in that sense is the image or idea of them, it having a like respect to other spirits, that bluntness or heat by me perceived hath 20 to those ideas perceived by another.

141 It must not be supposed, that they who assert the natural immortality of the soul are of opinion, that it is absolutely incapable of annihilation even by the infinite power of the Creator who first gave it being: but only that it is not liable to be broken or dissolved by the ordinary Laws of Nature or motion. They indeed, who hold the soul of man to be only a thin vital flame, or system of animal spirits, make it perishing and corruptible as the body, since there is nothing more easily dissipated than such a being, which it is naturally impossible should survive the ruin 30 of the tabernacle, wherein it is enclosed. And this notion hath been greedily embraced and cherished by the worst part of mankind, as the most effectual antidote against all impressions of virtue and religion. But it hath been made evident, that

l 1 or spiritual substance—(MS. omits). *l 1 If it be said that this—(A) But if I shou'd say, that I was nothing, or that I was an idea or notion, nothing cou'd be more evidently absurd than either of these propositions. You'll perhaps, insist, that this. . . . l 13 (In MS. all this Section is on the facing page reserved for additions and corrections; 'or rather a notion,' added in B, is in MS. but crossed out.) l 14 or rather a notion (B only). l 22 (A begins) The natural immortality of the soul is a necessary consequence of the foregoing doctrine. But before we attempt to prove this, 'tis fit that we explain the meaning of that tenent. It must not . . .*

¹ [See note on Sect. 27.—Ed.]
(630)

bodies of what frame or texture soever, are barely passive ideas in the mind, which is more distant and heterogeneous from them, than light is from darkness. We have shewn that the soul is indivisible, incorporeal, unextended, and it is consequently incorruptible. — Nothing can be plainer, — than — that the motions, changes, decays, and dissolutions which we hourly see befall natural bodies (and which is what we mean by the *course of Nature*) cannot possibly affect an active, simple, uncompounded substance: such a being therefore is indissoluble by the force of Nature, that is to say, *the soul of man is naturally immortal.*

142 After what hath been said, it is I suppose plain, that our souls are not to be known in the same manner as senseless inactive objects, or by way of *idea*. *Spirits* and *ideas* are things so wholly different, that when we say, *they exist, they are known*, or the like, these words must not be thought to signify any thing common to both natures. There is nothing alike or common in them: and to expect that by any multiplication or enlargement of our faculties, we may be enabled to know a spirit as we do a triangle, seems as absurd as if we should hope to *see a sound*. This is inculcated because I imagine it may be of moment towards clearing several important questions, and preventing some very dangerous errors concerning the nature of the soul. We may not I think strictly be said to have an idea of an active being, or of an action, although we may be said to have a notion of them. I have some knowledge or notion of my mind, and its acts about ideas, inasmuch as I know or understand what is meant by those words. What I know, that I have some notion of. I will not say, that the terms *idea* and *notion* may not be used convertibly, if the world will have it so. But yet it conduceth to clearness and propriety, that we distinguish things very different by different names. It is also to be remarked, that all relations including an act of the mind, we cannot so properly be said to have an *idea*, but rather a notion of the relations or habitudes between things.¹ But if in the modern way the word *idea* is extended to spirits, and relations and acts; this is after all an affair of verbal concern.

143 It will not be amiss to add, that the doctrine of *abstract ideas* hath had no small share in rendering those sciences intricate

122 *We may not . . . (to end of Section, B only).*

¹ [Berkeley nowhere develops this view of relations, which seems to imply that relations among 'ideas' are not discovered but instituted by the mental act, or at any rate that the activity of relating somehow enters into the content of the relation.—Ed.]

and obscure, which are particularly conversant about spiritual things. Men have imagined they could frame abstract notions of the powers and acts of the mind, and consider them prescinded, as well from the mind or spirit it self, as from their respective objects and effects. Hence a great number of dark and ambiguous terms presumed to stand for abstract notions, have been introduced into metaphysics and morality, and from these have grown infinite distractions and disputes amongst the learned.

144 But nothing seems more to have contributed towards engaging men in controversies and mistakes, with regard to the nature and operations of the mind, than the being used to speak of those things, in terms borrowed from sensible ideas. For example, the will is termed the *motion* of the soul: this infuses a belief, that the mind of man is as a ball in motion, impelled and determined by the objects of sense, as necessarily as that is by the stroke of a racket. Hence arise endless scruples and errors of dangerous consequence in morality. All which I doubt not may be cleared, and truth appear plain, uniform, and consistent, could but philosophers be prevailed on to retire into themselves, and attentively consider their own meaning. 20

145 From what hath been said, it is plain that we cannot know the existence of other spirits, otherwise than by their operations, or the ideas by them excited in us. I perceive several motions, changes, and combinations of ideas, that inform me there are certain particular agents like my self, which accompany them, and concur in their production. Hence the knowledge I have of other spirits is not immediate, as is the knowledge of my ideas; but depending on the intervention of ideas, by me referred to agents or spirits distinct from myself, as effects or concomitant signs.¹

146 But though there be some things which convince us, 30 human agents are concerned in producing them; yet it is evident to every one, that those things which are called the works of Nature, that is, the far greater part of the ideas or sensations perceived by us, are not produced by, or dependent on the wills

^{l 19} retire . . . meaning—(A) depart from some receiv'd prejudices and modes of speech, and retiring into themselves attentively consider their own meaning. But the difficulties arising on this head, demand a more particular disquisition, than suits with the design of this treatise. ^{l 21} it is plain . . . operations—(MS.) it follows that the existence of other spirits is capable of being made known only by the effects of their operations (here the MS. abruptly ends).

¹ [On the knowledge of other minds see also *Alciphron*, IV 5. *Cp. Malebranche, Recherche*, III 7 § v, and *Locke, Essay*, IV xi 12.—Ed.]

of men. There is therefore some other spirit that causes them, since it is repugnant that they should subsist by themselves. See *Sect. 29.* But if we attentively consider the constant regularity, order, and concatenation of natural things, the surprising magnificence, beauty, and perfection of the larger, and the exquisite contrivance of the smaller parts of the creation, together with the exact harmony and correspondence of the whole, but above all, the never enough admired laws of pain and pleasure, and the instincts or natural inclinations, appetites, and passions of animals ;
 10 I say if we consider all these things, and at the same time attend to the meaning and import of the attributes, one, eternal, infinitely wise, good, and perfect, we shall clearly perceive that they belong to the aforesaid spirit, *who works all in all, and by whom all things consist.*¹

147 Hence it is evident, that God is known as certainly and immediately as any other mind or spirit whatsoever, distinct from our selves. We may even assert, that the existence of God is far more evidently perceived than the existence of men ; because the effects of Nature are infinitely more numerous and considerable, 20 than those ascribed to human agents. There is not any one mark that denotes a man, or effect produced by him, which doth not more strongly evince the being of that spirit who is the *Author of Nature.* For it is evident that in affecting other persons, the will of man hath no other object, than barely the motion of the limbs of his body ; but that such a motion should be attended by, or excite any idea in the mind of another, depends wholly on the will of the Creator. He alone it is who *upholding all things by the Word of his Power,* maintains that intercourse between spirits, whereby they are able to perceive the existence of each other. 30 And yet this pure and clear light which enlightens every one, is it self invisible.

148 It seems to be a general pretence of the unthinking herd, that they cannot see God. Could we but see him, say they, as we see a man, we should believe that he is, and believing obey his commands. But alas we need only open our eyes to see the sovereign Lord of all things with a more full and clear view, than we do any one of our fellow-creatures. Not that I imagine we see God (as some will have it) by a direct and immediate view, or see corporeal things, not by themselves, but by seeing that which 40 represents them in the essence of God, which doctrine is I must

¹ 31 *invisible—(A) invisible to the greatest part of mankind.*

¹ [I Cor. xii 6, and Col. i 17.—Ed.]

confess to me incomprehensible.¹ But I shall explain my meaning. A human spirit or person is not perceived by sense, as not being an idea ; when therefore we see the colour, size, figure, and motions of a man, we perceive only certain sensations or ideas excited in our own minds : and these being exhibited to our view in sundry distinct collections, serve to mark out unto us the existence of finite and created spirits like our selves. Hence it is plain, we do not see a man, if by *man* is meant that which lives, moves, perceives, and thinks as we do : but only such a certain collection of ideas, as directs us to think there is a distinct principle ¹⁰ of thought and motion like to our selves, accompanying and represented by it. And after the same manner we see God ; all the difference is, that whereas some one finite and narrow assemblage of ideas denotes a particular human mind, whithersoever we direct our view, we do at all times and in all places perceive manifest tokens of the divinity : every thing we see, hear, feel, or any wise perceive by sense, being a sign or effect of the Power of God ; as is our perception of those very motions, which are produced by men.

¹⁴⁹ It is therefore plain, that nothing can be more evident ²⁰ to any one that is capable of the least reflexion, than the existence of God, or a spirit who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of ideas or sensations, which continually affect us, on whom we have an absolute and entire dependence, in short, *in whom we live, and move, and have our being*. That the discovery of this great truth which lies so near and obvious to the mind, should be attained to by the reason of so very few, is a sad instance of the stupidity and inattention of men, who, though they are surrounded with such clear manifestations of the Deity, are yet so little affected by them, that they seem as it were blinded ³⁰ with excess of light.

¹⁵⁰ But you will say, hath Nature no share in the production of natural things, and must they be all ascribed to the immediate and sole operation of God ? I answer, if by *Nature* is meant only the visible *series* of effects, or sensations imprinted on our minds according to certain fixed and general laws : then it is plain, that Nature taken in this sense cannot produce any thing at all. But if by *Nature* is meant some being distinct from God, as well as from the Laws of Nature, and things perceived by sense, I must confess that word is to me an empty sound, without any intelligible ⁴⁰ meaning annexed to it. Nature in this acceptation is a vain

¹ [The reference is to Malebranche. See below, p. 153.—Ed.]

chimera introduced by those heathens, who had not just notions of the omnipresence and infinite perfection of God. But it is more unaccountable, that it should be received among Christians professing belief in the Holy Scriptures, which constantly ascribe those effects to the immediate hand of God, that heathen philosophers are wont to impute to *Nature*. *The Lord, he causeth the vapours to ascend ; he maketh lightnings with rain ; he bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures*, Jerem. Chap. 10. ver. 13. *He turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night*, 10 Amos Chap. 5. ver. 8. *He visiteth the earth, and maketh it soft with showers : he blesseth the springing thereof, and crowneth the year with his goodness ; so that the pastures are clothed with flocks, and the valleys are cover'd over with corn*. See Psalm 65. But notwithstanding that this is the constant language of Scripture ; yet we have I know not what aversion from believing, that God concerns himself so nearly in our affairs. Fain would we suppose him at a great distance off, and substitute some blind unthinking deputy in his stead, though (if we may believe Saint Paul) *he be not far from every one of us.*¹

20 151 It will I doubt not be objected, that the slow and gradual methods observed in the production of natural things, do not seem to have for their cause the immediate hand of an *almighty Agent*. Besides, monsters, untimely births, fruits blasted in the blossom, rains falling in desert places, miseries incident to human life, are so many arguments that the whole frame of *Nature* is not immediately actuated and superintended by a spirit of infinite wisdom and goodness. But the answer to this objection is in a good measure plain from Sect. 62, it being visible, that the aforesaid methods of *Nature* are absolutely necessary, in order to 30 working by the most simple and general rules, and after a steady and consistent manner ; which argues both the *wisdom* and *goodness* of God. Such is the artificial contrivance of this mighty machine of *Nature*, that whilst its motions and various phenomena strike on our senses, the hand which actuates the whole is it self unperceivable to men of flesh and blood. *Verily* (saith the prophet) *thou art a God that hidest thy self*, Isaiah Chap. 45. ver. 15. But though God conceal himself from the eyes of the *sensual and lazy*,

l 32 of God. Such—(A) of God. For, it doth hence follow, that the finger of God is not so conspicuous to the resolv'd and careless sinner, which gives him an opportunity to harden in his impiety, and grow ripe for vengeance. vid. Sect. LVII. Such . . . l 37 God—(A) the Lord.

¹ [Acts, xvii 27.—Ed.]

who will not be at the least expence of thought ; yet to an unbiassed and attentive mind, nothing can be more plainly legible, than the intimate presence of an *all-wise Spirit*, who fashions, regulates, and sustains the whole system of being. It is clear from what we have elsewhere observed, that the operating according to general and stated laws, is so necessary for our guidance in the affairs of life, and letting us into the secret of Nature, that without it, all reach and compass of thought, all human sagacity and design could serve to no manner of purpose : it were even impossible there should be any such facultics or 10 powers in the mind. See *Sect. 31.* Which one consideration abundantly out-balances whatever particular inconvenicncest may thence arise.

152 We should further consider, that the very blemishes and defects of Nature are not without their use, in that they make an agreeable sort of variety, and augment the beauty of the rest of the creation, as shades in a picture serve to set off the brighter and more enlightened parts. We would likewise do well to examine, whether our taxing the waste of seeds and embryos, and accidental destruction of plants and animals, before they come to 20 full maturity, as an imprudence in the Author of Nature, be not the effect of prejudice contracted by our familiarity with impotent and saving mortals. In *man* indeed a thrifty management of those things, which he cannot procure without much pains and industry, may be esteemed *wisdom*. But we must not imagine, that the inexplicably fine machine of an animal or vegetable, costs the great Creator any more pains or trouble in its production than a pebble doth : nothing being more evident, than that an omnipotent spirit can indifferently produce every thing by a mere *fiat* or act of his will. Hence it is plain, that the 30 splendid profusion of natural things should not be interpreted, weakness or prodigality in the agent who produces them, but rather be looked on as an argument of the riches of his power.

153 As for the mixture of pain or uneasiness which is in the world, pursuant to the general laws of Nature, and the actions of finite imperfect spirits : this, in the state we are in at present, is indispensably necessary to our well-being. But our prospects are too narrow : we take, for instance, the idea of some one particular pain into our thoughts, and account it *evil* ; whereas if we enlarge our view, so as to comprehend the various ends, con- 40 nections, and dependencies of things, on what occasions and in 14 being. *It—(A) beings.* *Secondly, it.* 14 *We—(A) But we.*

what proportions we are affected with pain and pleasure, the nature of human freedom, and the design with which we are put into the world ; we shall be forced to acknowledge that those particular things, which considered in themselves appear to be *evil*, have the nature of *good*, when considered as linked with the whole system of beings.

154 From what hath been said it will be manifest to any considering person, that it is merely for want of attention and comprehensiveness of mind, that there are any favourers of ¹⁰ *atheism* or the *Manichean heresy* to be found. Little and unreflecting souls may indeed burlesque the works of Providence, the beauty and order whereof they have not capacity, or will not be at the pains to comprehend. But those who are masters of any justness and extent of thought, and are withal used to reflect, can never sufficiently admire the divine traces of wisdom and goodness that shine throughout the economy of Nature. But what truth is there which shineth so strongly on the mind, that by an aversion of thought, a wilful shutting of the eyes, we may not escape seeing it ? Is it therefore to be wondered at, if the generality of men, ²⁰ who are ever intent on business or pleasure, and little used to fix or open the eye of their mind, should not have all that conviction and evidence of the being of God, which might be expected in reasonable creatures ?

155 We should rather wonder, that men can be found so stupid as to neglect, than that neglecting they should be unconvinced of such an evident and momentous truth. And yet it is to be feared that too many of parts and leisure, who live in Christian countries, are merely through a supine and dreadful negligence sunk into a sort of *atheism*. Since it is downright ³⁰ impossible, that a soul pierced and enlightened with a thorough sense of the omnipresence, holiness, and justice of that *Almighty Spirit*, should persist in a remorseless violation of his laws. We ought therefore earnestly to meditate and dwell on those important points ; that so we may attain conviction without all scruple, *that the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good ; that he is with us and keepeth us in all places whither we go, and*

l 17 shineth—(A) glares. l 18 seeing it—(A) seeing it, at least with a full and direct view ? l 24 wonder—(A) admire. l 29 atheism—(A) deny-atheism. They can't say there is not a God, but neither are they convinced that there is. For what else can it be but some lurking infidelity, some secret misgivings of mind, with regard to the existence and attributes of God, which permits sinners to grow and harden in impiety ? Since . . .

giveth us bread to eat, and raiment to put on ; that he is present and conscious to our innermost thoughts ; and that we have a most absolute and immediate dependence on him. A clear view of which great truths cannot choose but fill our hearts with an awful circumspection and holy fear, which is the strongest incentive to *virtue*, and the best guard against *vice*.

156 For after all, what deserves the first place in our studies, is the consideration of *God*, and our *duty* ; which to promote, as it was the main drift and design of my labours, so shall I esteem them altogether useless and ineffectual, if by what I have said ¹⁰ I cannot inspire my readers with a pious sense of the presence of *God* : and having shewn the falseness or vanity of those barren speculations, which make the chief employment of learned men, the better dispose them to reverence and embrace the salutary truths of the *Gospel*, which to know and to practise is the highest perfection of human nature.

l 2 and that—(A) in fine, that.

First draft of
The Introduction to the
Principles

Printed from the Manuscript

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

FRASER discovered this draft, in Berkeley's hand, in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin (Chapman MS. D. 5. 17), and printed it first in C. P. Krauth's edition of the *Principles* (1874, Philadelphia) and then in his own 1901 edition of Berkeley's Works (vol. iii, pp. 357ff). The MS. consists of thirty-three leaves of a note-book. The recto of each sheet bears the main text, with many deletions, corrections, and additions ; the facing verso is reserved for further corrections and additions, which are numerous. The writing has been done in daily pieces, and at the end of each piece the date is inserted in the left-hand margin. The first date is 15 Nov. 1708 and the last 18 Dec.

Apart from an approximation to a facsimile, there is no typographical way of reproducing the MS. with any clearness. Fraser probably comes as near to success as is possible, but the result is confusing, not enabling us to reconstruct either the first text or the last. The last text is much fuller than the one printed by Berkeley, but on the whole is fairly close to this. The first text, the original draft, being more widely removed from the Introduction as eventually printed, is obviously the more interesting. I have therefore transcribed only what Berkeley wrote *prima manu*, including such small corrections as he seems to have made while writing. I have placed his marginal dates in curved brackets at the end of each day's portion, and have indicated in square brackets at the beginning of each paragraph (the paragraphing is Berkeley's) the corresponding section of the final Introduction, using the cipher [o] where there is no such section.

Compared with the printed Introduction, the draft neither adds nor omits anything of substance. The paragraph containing the conceit of the solitary man (p. 141), like nearly all the rest, is anticipated in the *Philosophical Commentaries*, where some importance is attached to it (entries 566, 588, 592, 607, 648, 727). It is but another illustration of the general contention of the Introduction, that the chief root of error is language : if we could only drop words and directly contemplate our 'ideas,' we should read off the nature of these without mistake. 'To behold the deformity of error, we need only undress it' is a saying in the draft that could well have gone forward into print.

First Draft of the
Introduction to the Principles

The Text

FIRST DRAFT OF THE INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES

Printed from the Manuscript

[1] Philosophy being nothing else but the study of wisdom & truth, it may seem strange, that they who have spent much time & pains in it, do usually find themselves embarrass'd with more doubts & difficulties, than they were before they came to that study. There is nothing these men can touch with their hands or behold with their eyes but has its dark sides. Something they imagine in every drop of water, every grain of sand which can puzzle & confound the most clear & elevated understanding, & are often by their principles lead into a necessity of admitting the most irreconcilable opinion or (which is worse) of sitting down in a forlorn scepticism.

[2] The cause of this is thought to be the obscurity of things, together with the natural weakness & imperfection of our understandings. It is said the senses we have are few, & those design'd by Nature only for the support of life, & not to penetrate into the constitution and inward essence of things. Besides, the mind of man being finite when it treats of things which partake of infinity, it is not to be wonder'd at if it run into inconsistencys & contradictions, out of which it is impossible it should ever extricate it self, it being of the nature of infinite not to be comprehended by that which is finite. (Nov. 15, 1708.)

[3] But I cannot think our faculties are so weak & inadequate in respect of things, as these men would make us believe. I cannot be brought to suppose, that right deductions from true principles should ever terminate in consequences, which cannot be maintain'd or made consistent. We should believe that God has dealt more bountifully with the sons of men, than to give them a strong desire for that which he had placed quite out of their reach, & so made it impossible for them to obtain. Surely our wise & good Creator would never have made us so eager in the search of truth, merely to baulk and perplex us, to make us blame our faculties, & bewail our inevitable ignorance. This were not agreeable to the wonted indulgent methods of Prov-

dence, which whatever appetites it may have implanted in the creatures, doth usually furnish them with such means as, if rightly made use of, will not fail to satisfy them. Upon the whole my opinion is, that the far greatest part, if not all, of those difficultys which have hitherto amus'd philosophcrs, & block'd up the way to knowlege, are entirely owing to themselves. That they have first rais'd a dust, & then complain they cannot see.

[4] My purpose therefore is, to endeavour to discover & point out, what those principles are, which have introduc'd all that doubtfulness & uncertainty, those absurditys & contradictions into the several sects of philosophy, insomuch that the wisest men have thought our ignorance incurable, concceiving it to arise from the natural dulness & limitation of our faculties. And at the same time, to substitute such principles in their stead, as shall be free from the like consequences. (17) And surely it is a work well deserving of our pains, to try to extend the limits of our knowlege, & beat down those mounds and barriers that have been put to human understanding, by making it to appear that those lets & difficultys which stay & embarrass the mind in its enquirys after truth, do not spring from any darkness & intricacy in the objects, or incurable defect in the intellectual powers, so much as from false principles which have been insisted on, & might have been avoided.

[5] How difficult & discouraging soever this attempt may seem, when I consider what a number of men of very great and extraordinary abilitys have gone before me, & miscarry'd in the like undertakings, I am not without some hopes, upon the consideration that the largest views are not always the clearest, & that he who is shortsighted will be apt to draw the object nearer, & by a close & narrow survey may perhaps discover that which had escaped far better eyes. (18)

[6] But here in the entrance before I proceed any farther I think it necessary to take notice of one very powerfull & universal cause of error & confusion & that is the opinion that there are abstract ideas or general conceptions of things. He who is not a perfect stranger to the writings & notions of philosophers must needs acknowlege that a very great part of their disputes & contemplations are concerning abstract ideas. These are, in a more especial manner, thought to be the objects of those sciences, that go by the name of Logics & Metaphysics, & of all that which passes under the notion of the most abstracted & sublime philosophy, in all which speculative sciences you shall scarce find any

question handled by the philosophers in such a manner as does not suppose their existence in the mind, & that it is very well acquainted with them ; so that those parts of learning must of necessity be overrun with very much useless wrangling & jargon, innumerable absurdities & contradictions, if so be that abstract general ideas are perfectly inconceivable, as I am well assur'd they never were conceiv'd by me nor do I think it possible they should be conceiv'd by any one else.

[7] By abstract ideas, genera, species, universal notions all which amount to the same thing, as I find those terms explain'd by the best and clearest writers, we are to understand ideas which equally represent the particulars of any sort, & are made by the mind which observing that the individuals of each kind agree in some things, & differ in others, takes out & singles from the rest, that which is common to all, making thereof one abstract, general idea ; which general idea contains all those ideas wherein the particulars do agree & partake separated from & exclusive of all those other concomitant ideas, whereby the individuals are distinguish'd from each other. (19)

[8] This abstract, general idea, thus framed the mind gives a general name & lays it up & uses it as a standard whereby to judge what particulars are & what are not to be accounted of that sort ; those only which contain every part of the general idea having a right to be admitted into that sort & called by that name.

[9] For example, the mind having observ'd that Peter, James & John &c resemble each other, in certain common agreements of shape & other qualitys, leaves out of the complex idea it has of Peter, James &c that which is peculiar to each, retaining onely that which is common to all. And so it makes one general complex idea, wherein all the particulars do partake, abstracting entirely from and cutting of all those circumstances & differences, which might determine it to any particular existence. & after this manner you come by a clear, precise, abstract idea of a man. In which idea it is true there is included colour, because there is no man but hath some colour, but then it can be neither, white colour nor black colour nor any particular colour, but colour in general, because there is no one particular colour wherin all men do partake. In the like manner, you will tell me there is included stature, but it is neither tall stature, nor low stature, nor yet middling stature, but stature in general. And so of the rest. Suppose now I should ask whether you comprehended in this your abstract idea of man, the ideas of eyes, or ears, or nose, or

legs, or arms, this might perhaps put you to a stand for an answer, for it must needs make an odd & frightfull figure, the idca of a man without all these. Yet it must be so to make it consistent with the doctrine of abstract ideas, there bcing particular men that want, some arms, some legs, some noses &c.

[9] But supposing the abstract idea of man to be vry conceivable, let us proceed to see by what steps & abstractions it comes to be enlarg'd into the more general & comprehensive idea of animal. There being a great varicity of other creatures that partake in some parts, but not all, of the complx idca of man, the mind leaving out those parts which are peculiar to men, & retaining those onlly which are common to all the living creatures, frames the idea of animal, which is more general than that of man, it comprehending not only all particular men but also all birds, beasts, fishes & insects. The constituent parts of the complex idea of animal are body, life, sense & spontaneous motion. By body is meant body in general, without any particular shape or figure, there being no one shape or figure common to all animals, without covering either of hair, or feathers, or fins & yet it is not naked. Hair, feathers, fins & nakedness being distinguishing properties of the particular animals, & for that reason left out of the general idea. Upon the same account, the spontaneous motion must be neither walking nor flying nor creeping, it is nevertheless a motion, but w^t that motion is it is not easy to say.

[8] In like manner a man having seen several lines by leaving out of his idea of a line all particular colours & all particular lengths comes by the idca of a line, which is neither black, nor white, nor red &c nor long nor short, which he calls the abstract idea of a line, & which, for ought that I can see, is just nothing. For I ask whether a line has any more than one particular colour & one particular length, wth when they are being left out, I beseech any man to consider what it is that remains. (20)

[10] Whether others have this marvellous faculty of abstracting their ideas, they can best tell. For my self I darc be confident I have it not, & I am apt to think that some of those who fancy themselves to enjoy that privilege, would upon looking narrowly into their own thoughts, find they wanted it as much as I. For there was a time when being banter'd & abus'd by words, I did not in the least doubt my having it. But upon a strict survey of my abilitys, I not only discover my own deficiency in that point, but also cannot conceive it possible that such a power should be

in the most perfect & exalted understanding : I find I have a faculty of imagining, conceiving or representing to my self the ideas of those particular things I have perceiv'd, & of variously compounding & dividing them. I can imagine a man with two heads, or the upper parts of a man joyn'd to the body of a horse. I can consider the hand, the eyc, the nose each by it self singled out & separated from, the rest of the body. But then whatever eye or nose I imagine they must have some particular shape & colour. The idea of man that I frame to my self must be either of a white, or a black, or a tawny, a straight or a crooked, a tall or a low or a middling sized man. I cannot by any effort of imagination frame to my self an idea of man prescinding from all particulars that shall have nothing particular in it. For my life I cannot comprchend abstract ideas.

[10] And there are grounds to think, the far greater part of men will acknowlegc thcm selves to bc in my case. The generality of men, which are simple & illitrate, never pretend to abstract notions. It is said they are difficult & not to be attain'd without much study & speculation, we may therefore reasonably conclude that, if such there bc, they are altogether confin'd to the learned.

[o] But it must bc confess'd, I do not see what great advantage they give them above the rest of mankind. He who considers that whatever has any existencce in Nature, & can any wise affect or concern him is particular will not find great cause to be discontent with his facultys, if he cannot reach a picce of knowlge as useless as it is refin'd ; and which whether it be to be found even in those deep thinkers may well be made a question. (22)

[o] For besides the incomprehensibility of abstract ideas (which may pass for an argument, since those gentlemen do not pretend to any new facultys, distinct from those of ordinary men) there are not wanting other proofs against them. It is, I think, a receiv'd axiom that an impossibility cannot be conceiv'd. For what created intelligence will pretend to conceive, that which God cannot cause to be ? Now it is on all hands agreed, that nothing abstract or general can be made really to exist, whence it should seem to follow, that it cannot have so much as an ideal existence in the understanding.

[11] I do not think it necessary to insist on any more proofs, against the doctrine of abstraction in this place, especially for that the absurditys, which in the progress of this work I shall observe to have sprung from that doctrine, will yield plenty of arguments a posteriori against it. I procced therefore to examin what can

be alleg'd in defence thereof & try if I can discover what it is that has inclin'd the men of speculation, to embrace an opinion so pregnant of absurditys, & so remote from common sense as that seems to be.

[11] There has been a late excellent & deservedly esteem'd philosopher, to whose judgment, so far as authority is of any weight with me, I would pay the utmost deference. This great man, no doubt, has very much countenanc'd the doctrine I oppose, by seeming to think, the having abstract ideas is that which puts the widest difference in point of understanding betwixt man & beast. Thus speaks he. 'The having of general ideas is that which puts a perfect distinction betwixt man & brutes, & is an excellency which the facultys of brutes do by no means attain unto. For it is evident we observe no footsteps in them of making use of general signs for making universal ideas; from which we have reason to imagin that they have not the faculty of abstracting, or making general ideas since they have no use of words or any other general signs.' And a little lower. 'Therefore I think we may suppose yt 'tis in this that the species of brutes are discriminated from men, & 'tis that proper difference wherein they are wholly separated & which at last widens to so wide a distance. For if they have any ideas at all & are not bare machins (as some would have them) we cannot deny them to have some reason. It seems as evident to me, that they do some of them in certain instances reason, as that they have sense, but it is only in particular ideas, just as they receiv'd them from their senscs. They are the best of them tied up within those narrow bounds, & have not (as I think) the faculty to enlarge them by any kind of abstraction.' *Essay on Human Understanding*, B.2. c.11. s.10, 11. (23) I readily agree with this author that the faculties of brutes can by no means attain to the making of general ideas. But then if that inability to abstract be made the distinguishing property of that sort of animals, I fear a grcat many of those that now pass for men must be reckon'd into their number.

[11] The reason which is here assign'd, why we have no grounds to think that brutes have general ideas, is that we observe in them no use of words or other general signs. Which is built on this supposition—that the making use of words implys the having of general ideas, & that reciprocally those who have general ideas fail not to make use of words, or other universal signs, whereby to express & signify them. From which it must follow, that men who use language are able to abstract & generalize their ideas,

but brutes, who use it not, are destitute of that faculty. That this is the sense & arguing of the author of the Essay, will farther appear, by his answering the question he in another place puts. 'Since all things that exist are only particulars how come we by general terms?' His answer is, 'Words become general by being made the signs of general ideas.' Essay on Human Understanding, b. 3. c. 3. s. 6. From which assertion I must crave here to dissent, being of opinion that a word becomes general by being made the sign, not of a general idea but, of many particular ideas. Sure I am, as to what concerns myself, when I say the word Socrates is a proper or particular name, and the word Man an appellative or general name, I mean no more than this viz that the one is peculiar & appropriated to one particular person, the other common to a great many particular persons, each whereof has an equal right to be called by the name Man. This, I say, is the whole truth of the matter & not that I make any incomprehensible, abstract idea whereunto I annex the name Man. That were to make my words stand for I know not what.

[o] That great man seems to think, the necessary ends of language cou'd not be attain'd to without the use of abstract ideas. b. 3 c. 6 s. 39 & elsewhere he shews it to be his opinion that they are made in order to naming. b.3 c.1 s.3. He has these words. 'It is not enough for the perfection of language, that sounds can be made signs of ideas, unless those signs can be so made use of as to comprehend several particular things: for the multiplication of words would have perplex'd their use, had every particular thing need of a distinct name to be signify'd by. To remedy this inconvenience language had yet a farther improvement in the use of general terms whereby one word was made to mark a number of particular existences. Which advantageous use of sounds was obtain'd only by the difference of the ideas they were made signs of. Those names becoming general which are made to stand for general ideas, and those remaining particular where the ideas they are used for are particular.' (24) Now I would fain know, why a word may not be made to comprehend a great number of particular things in its signification, without the interposition of a general idea. Is it not possible to give the name Man to Peter, James, & John, without having first made that strange &, to me, incomprehensible idea of Man which shall have nothing of particular in it? Or must we imagine that a child upon sight of a particular body, & being told it is called

an apple, must frame to himself a general idea thercof abstracting from all particular colour, tast & figure before he can attain to the use of the word apple, & apply it to all the particulars of that sort of fruit that come in his way. This, surely, is a task too hard & metaphysical to be perform'd by an infant, just beginning to speak. [12] I appeal to the experience of any grown man, whether this be the course he takes in acquainting himself with the proper use & signification of any word ; let any man take a fair & impartial view of his own thoughts, & then determine, whether his general words do not become so by being made to mark a number of particular existences, without any the least thought of abstraction. For what, I pray, are words but signs of our thoughts? & how are signs of any sort render'd universal, otherwise than by being made to signify, or represent indifferently, a multitude of particular things ?

[o] The ideas that are in every man's mind ly hidden & cannot of themselves be brought into the view of another. It was therefore necessary for discourse & communication, that men should institute sounds to be signs of their ideas, which being raised in the mind of the hearer shall bring along with them into his understanding such ideas, as in the propriety of any language were annexed to them. But because of the almost infinite number & variety of our thoughts, it is impossible, & if it were possible would yet be a useless thing, to appropriate a particular sign or name to every one of them. (25) From which it must necessarily follow, that one word be made the sign of a great number of particular ideas, between which there is some likeness, & which are said to be of the same sort. But these sorts are not determin'd & set out by Nature, as was thought by most philosophers. Nor yet are they limited by any precise, abstract ideas settled in the mind, with the general name annexed to them as is the opinion of the author of the Essay, nor do they in truth, seem to me to have any precise bounds or limits at all. For if they had I do not see, how there could be those doubts & scruples, about the sorting of particular beings, which are observ'd sometimes to have happened. Neither do I think it necessary the kinds or species of things should be so very accurately bounded & marked out. Language being made by & for the common use of men, who do not ordinarily take notice of the minuter & less considerable differences of things. From all w^{ch} to me it seems evident that the having of general names does not imply the having of general ideas, but barely the marking by them a number of particular

ideas. And that all the ends of language may be, & are, attain'd to without the help of any such faculty as abstraction.

[o] Which will be made yet more manifest, if we consider the different manners wherein words represent ideas, & ideas things. There is no similitude or resemblance betwixt words & the ideas that are marked by them. Any name may be used indifferently for the sign of any idea, or any number of ideas, it not being determin'd by any likeness to represent one more than another. But it is not so with ideas in respect of things, of which they are suppos'd to be the copies & images. They are not thought to represent them any otherwise, than as they resemble them. Whence it follows, that an idea is not capable of representing indifferently any thing or number of things it being limited by the likeness it beares to some particular existence, to represent it rather than any other. The word Man may equally be put to signify any particular man I can think of. But I cannot frame an idea of man, which shall equally represent & correspond to each particular of that sort of creatures that may possibly exist. (26)

[13] I shall add one passage out of the Essay on Human Understanding, which is as follows. 'Abstract ideas are not so obvious or easy to children or the yet unexercised mind as particular ones. If they seem so to grown men 'tis only because by constant and familiar use they are made so. For when we nicely reflect upon them we shall find that general ideas are fictions and contrivances of the mind that carry difficulty with them and do not so easily offer themselves as we are apt to imagine. For example, does it not require some pains and skill to form the general idea of a triangle (which is yet none of the most abstract, comprehensive and difficult) for it must be neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once. In effect it is something imperfect that cannot exist; an idea wherein some parts of several different and inconsistent ideas are put together. 'Tis true the mind in this imperfect state has need of such ideas, and makes all the hast to them it can, for the conveniency of communication and enlargement of knowlege, to both which it is naturally very much enclin'd. But yet one has reason to suspect such ideas are marks of our imperfection. At least this is enough to shew, that the most abstract and general ideas are not those that the mind is first and most easily acquainted with, nor such as it's earliest knowlege is conversant about.' B.4 C.7 S.9. If any man has

the faculty of framing in his mind such an idea of a triangle as is here describ'd, it is in vain to pretend to dispute him out of it, nor would I go about it. All I dcsire is that every one would fully & certainly inform himself whether he has such an idea or no. And this, methinks can be no hard task for any one to perform. What more easy than for any one to look a littlc into his own understanding, and there try whether he has, or can attain to have, an idea that shall correspond with the description here given of the general idea of a triangle which is neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrurual nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once. He that can conceive such manifest contradictions & inconsistencys, 'tis fit he enjoy his privilege. For my part I am well assur'd I have not the power of making to my self those general ideas ; neither do I find that I have any need of them for the convcnience of communication and enlargement of knowlege. For which I am not sorry, because it is here said one has reason to suspect such ideas are marks of our *imperfection*. Tho', I must own, I do not see how this agrees with what has been above quoted out of the same author viz The having of general ideas is that which puts a perfect distinction betwixt man & brutes and is an *excellency* which the faculties of brutes do by no means attain unto.

[14] It is observable, that which is here said by that author on this occasion of the difficulty that abstract ideas carry with them, & the pains & skill that is requisite to the forming of them. To the same purpose Aristotle (who was certainly a great admirer and promoter of the doctrine of abstraction) has these words σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ χαλεπότατα γνωρίζειν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις 'στι' τὰ μάλιστα καθόλου πορρωτάτω γάρ τῶν αἰσθήσεων 'στι. There is scarce anything so incomprehensible to me as the most universal notions because they are most remote from sense. Metaph : Lib : i cap. 2.¹ & it is on all hands agreed, that there is need of great pains & toil & labour of the mind, to emancipate it from particular ideas such as are taken in by the senses, & raise it to these lofty speculations that are conversant about abstract and universal ones. (29)

[14] From all which the natural consequence should seem to be, that so difficult a thing as the forming of abstract ideas is not necessary for communication, which is so easy & familiar to all sorts of men, even the most barbarous & unreflecting. But we are told if they seem obvious & easy to grown men 'tis only

¹ [982a 23-5 in Bekker.—Ed.]

because by constant & familiar use they are made so. Now I would fain know at what time it is, men are employ'd in surmounting that difficulty, and furnishing themselves with those necessary praeiliminarys of discourse. It cannot be when they are grown up for then they are not conscious of any such pains-taking. It remains therefore to be the business of their childhood. And surely the great & multiply'd labour of framing general notions will be found a hard task for that tender age. Is it not a hard thing to imagine that a couple of children cannot commune one with another of their sugar-plumbs and rattles, & the rest of their little trinkets, till they have first framed in their minds general abstract ideas, and annex'd them to every common name they make use of?

[15] Nor do I think they are a whit more needfull for enlargement of knowlge, than for communication. For tho' it be a point much insisted on in the Schools, that all knowlege is about universals, yet I could never bring my self to comprehend this doctrine. It is acknowleg'd that nothing has a fairer title to the name of knowlege or science than Geometry. Now I appeal to any mans thoughts, whether upon the entrance into that study, the first thing to be done is to try to conceive a circle that is neither great nor small, nor of any determinate radius, also to make ideas of triangles & parallelograms, that are neither rectangular nor obliquangular &c? It is one thing for a proposition to be universally true, and another for it to be about universal natures or notions. Thus notwithstanding that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones is granted to be a proposition universally true, it will not therefore follow, that we are to understand it of universal triangles, or universal angles. It will suffice that it be true of the particular angles of any particular triangle whatsoever. (30)

[16] But here it will be demanded, how can we know any proposition to be true of all particular triangles, except we have first seen it demonstrated of the general idea of a triangle, which equally agrees to & represents them all? For because a property may be demonstrated to belong to some one particular triangle, it will not thence follow, that it equally belongs to any other triangle which in all respects is not the same with the former. For instance, having demonstrated that the three angles of an isosceles, rectangular triangle are equal to two right ones, I cannot therefore conclude this affection agrees to all other triangles, which have neither a right angle, nor two equal sides. It seems

therefore, that to be certain that proposition is universally true, we must either make a particular demonstration for every particular triangle, which is impossible, or else we must, once for all, demonstrate it of the general idea of a triangle, in which all the particulars do indifferently partake, and by which they are equally represented.

[16] To which I answer, that notwithstanding the idea I have in my mind, whilst I make the demonstration, be that of some particular triangle e.g. an isosceles, rectangular one whose sides are of a determinate length, I may nevertheless be certain that it extends to all other triangles of what sort soever. And that because neither the right angle, nor the equality, nor determinate length of the legs are at all concern'd in the demonstration. 'Tis true the diagram I have in my view does include those particulars, but then there is not the least mention made of them in the proof of the proposition. It is not said the three angles are equal to two right ones, because one of them is a right angle, or because the legs comprehending it are of the same length. Which sufficiently shews that the right angle might have been oblique & the sides unequal and yet the demonstration have held good. And for this reason it is, that I conclude that to be true of any obliquangular or scalenon, which I had demonstrated of a particular right-angled, equicrural triangle ; and not because I demonstrated the proposition of the general idea of a triangle, which was all & none, it not being possible for me to conceive any triangle whereof I cannot delineate the like on paper. But I believe no man, whatever he may conceive, will pretend to describe a general triangle with his pencil. This being rightly consider'd I believe we shall not be found to have any great need of those eternal, immutable, universal ideas about which the philosophers keep such a stir and without which they think there can be no science at all.

[o] But what becomes of those general maxims, those first principles of knowledge, those curious speculations of the metaphysicians all w^{ch} are suppos'd to be about abstract & universal ideas ? To which all the answer I can make is, that whatsoever proposition is made up of terms standing for general ideas, the same is to me, so far forth, absolutely unintelligible : and whether it be, that those speculative gentlemen have by earnest & profound study attain'd to an elevation of thought, above the reach of ordinary capacities and endeavours, or whatever else be the cause, sure I am there are in their writings many things which I now

find my self unable to understand. Tho' being accustom'd to those forms of speech I once thought there was no difficulty in them. But one thing to me seems pretty certain. How high soever that goodly fabrick of metaphysics might have been rais'd, and by what venerable names sover it may be supported if withall it be built on the sandy foundation of inconsistencys & contradictions, it is after all but a castle in the air. (Dec. 1. 30)

[17] It were an endless as well as an useless thing, to trace the Schoolmen, those great masters of abstraction, and all others whether ancient or modern logicians and metaphysicians, thro' those numerous inextricable labyrinths of error and dispute, which their doctrine of abstract notions seems to have led them into. What bickerings & controversys, and what a learned dust has been rais'd about those matters and what mighty emolument and advantagc has been deriv'd to mankind are things at this day too clearly known, to need to be insisted on by me. Nor has that doctrine been confin'd to those two sciences, that make the most avowed profession of it. The contagion thereof has spread throughout all the parts of philosophy. It has invaded and overrun those usefull studys of physic and divinity, and even the mathematicians themselves have had their full share of it.

[17] When we consider the great pains, industry and parts have for so many ages lay'd out on the cultivation and advancement of the sciences, and that for all this, the far greatest part of them remain full of doubts and unccrtainties, and disputes that arc like never to have an end, and even those, that arc thought to be supported by the most clear and cogent demonstrations, do contain in them paradoxes that are perfectly irconcilable to the understandings of men, and that taking all together a very small portion of them does supply any real benefit to mankind, otherwise than by bcing an innocent diversion and amusement. I say upon the consideration of all this, men are wont to be cast into an amazement and despondency, and perfect contempt of all study. But that wonder and despair may perhaps ceasc, upon a view of the false principles and wrong foundations of science that have been made use of, amongst all which there is none, methinks, of a more wide and universal sway over the thoughts of studious men, than that we have been endeavouring to detect and overthrow. To me certainly it does not seem strange that unprofitable debates and absurd and extravagant opinions should abound in the writings of those men who disdaining the vulgar and obvious

informations of sense do in the depth of their understanding contemplate abstract ideas. (Dec. 2.)

[18] I come now to consider the cause of this prevailing imagination in the minds of men, and that seems to me most evidently to be language. And surely nothing of less extent than reason it self could have been the source of an opinion, as epidemical as it seems absurd. That the conceit of abstract ideas ows its birth and originc to words, will appear, as from other reasons so also, from the plain confession of the ablest patrons of y^t doctrine, who do acknowlege that they are made in order to naming, from which it is a clear consequence, that if there had been no such thing as spech, or universal signs, there ncver had been any thought of abstract idcas. I find it also declared in express terms that general truths can never be well made known and very seldom apprehended but as concived and expressed in words. All which doth plainly set forth the inseparable connexion and dependence on each other that is thought to be between words and abstract ideas. For whereas it is elsewhere said that general ideas were necessary for communication by general names, here on the other hand, we are told that names are needfull for the understanding of abstract notions or general truths. (3) Now, by the bye, I would fain know how it is possible for words, to make a man apprehend that which he cannot apprehend without them. I do not deny they are necessary for communication, and so making me know the ideas that are in the mind of another. But when any truth whether general or particular is made known to me by words so that I rightly apprehend the ideas contained in it, I see no manner of reason, why I may not omit the words, and yet retain as full and clear a conception of the ideas themselves, as I had of them while they were cloathed with words. Words being, so far as I can see, of use for recording and communicating, but not absolutely apprehending, of ideas. I know there be some things that pass for truths, that will not bear this stripping of the attire of words, but this I always took for a sure and certain sign, that there were no clear and determinate ideas underneath. I proceed to shew the manner, wherein words have contributed to the growth and origine of that mistake.

[18] That which seems to me principally to have drove men into the conceit of general ideas, is the opinion, that every name has, or ought to have, one only precise and settl'd signification. Which inclines them to think there are certain abstract, determinate, general ideas that make the true and only immediate

signification of each general name. And that it is by the mediation of these abstract ideas, that a general name comes to signify any particular thing. Whereas there is in truth an homonymy or diversity of significations in every name whatsoever except only the proper names. Nor is there any such thing as a precise and definite signification annexed to each name. All which does evidently follow from what has been already said, and will clearly appear to any one by a little reflexion.

[18] But to this, I doubt not, it will be objected that every name that has a definition, is thereby tied down and restrain'd to a particular signification, e.g. a triangle is defin'd to be a plain surface comprehended by three right lines by which, that name is limited to denote one certain idea, and no other. To which I answer, that in the definition it is not said, whether the surface be great, or small, black, or white, or transparent, whether the sides are long or short, equal or unequal, or with what angles they are inclin'd to each other. (4) In all which there may be great variety, and consequently there is no one settled idea, which limits the signification of the word triangle. Nor does it avail to say the abstract idea of a triangle, which bounds the signification of that name, is it self determin'd, tho' the angles sides &c are not. For, besides the absurdity of such an idea that has been already shewn, it is evident that if the parts i.e. the lines, angles and surface are themselves various and undetermin'd the complex idea or whole i.e. triangle cannot be one settled, determinate idea. (5)

[19] But to give a further account, how words came to introduce the doctrine of universal ideas, it will be necessary to observe there is a notion current among those that pass for the deepest thinkers, that every significant name stands for an idea. It is said by them that a proposition cannot otherwise be understood than by perceiving the agreement or disagreement of the ideas marked by the terms of it. Whence it follows that according to those men every proposition that is not jargon must consist of terms or names that carry along with them each a determinate idea. This being so, and it being withall certain that names which yet are not thought altogether insignificant do not always mark out particular ideas it is straightway concluded that they stand for general ones.

[o] In answer to this I say that names significant names do not always stand for ideas but that they may be and are often used to good purpose without being suppos'd to stand for or

represent any idea at all. And as to what we are told of understanding propositions by perceiving the agreement or disagreement of the ideas marked by their terms, this to me in many cases seems absolutely false. For the better clearing and demonstrating of all which I shall make use of some particular instances. Suppose I have the idea of some one particular dog to which I give the name Melampus and then frame this proposition Melampus is an animal, where 'tis evident the name Melampus denotes one particular idea. And as for the other name or form of the proposition there are a sort of philosophcrs will tell you thereby is meant not only a universal conception but also corresponding thereto a universal nature or essence really existing without the mind whereof Melampus doth partake. But this with reason is exploded as nonsensical and absurd. But then those men who have so clearly and fully detected the emptiness and insignificancy of that wretched jargon of . . . [illegible abbreviation] are themselves to me equally unintelligible. For they will have it that if I understand what I say I must make the name animal stand for an abstract, generical idea which agrees to and corresponds with the particular idea marked by the name Melampus. But if a man may be allow'd to know his own meaning I do declare that in my thoughts the word animal is neither supposed to stand for an universal nature nor yet for an abstract idea which to me is at least as absurd and incomprehensible as the other. Nor does it indeed in that proposition stand for any idea at all. All that I intend to signify thereby being only this, that the particular thing I call Melampus has a right to be called by the name animal. And I do intreat any one to make this easy tryal. Let him but cast out of his thoughts the words of the proposition and then see whether two clear and determinate ideas remain in his understanding whereof he finds one to be conformable to the other. I perceive it evidently in my self that upon laying aside all thought of the words ' Melampus is an animal ' I have remaining in my mind one only naked and bare idea viz that particular one to which I give the name Melampus. Tho' some there be that pretend they have also a general idea signified by the word animal, which idea is made up of inconsistencys and contradictions as has been already shewn. Whether this or that be the truth of the matter I desire every particular person to consider and conclude for him self. (6)

[o] And this methinks may pretty clearly inform us how men might first have come to think there was a general idea of animal.

For in the proposition we have instanc'd in it is plain the word animal is not suppos'd to stand for the idea of any one particular animal, for if it be made stand for another different from that is marked by the name Melampus, the proposition is false and includes a contradiction. And if it be made signify the very same individual that Melampus doth, it is a tautology. But it is presumed that every name stands for an idea. It remains therefore that the word animal stands for the general, abstract idea of animal. In like manner we may be able with a little attention to discover how general ideas of all sorts might at first have stolen into the thoughts of men.

[o] But farther to make it evident that words may be used to good purpose without bringing into the mind determinate ideas, I shall add this instance. We are told that the good things which God hath prepared for them that love him are such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor hath it enter'd into the heart of man to conceive. What man will pretend to say these words of the inspir'd writer are empty and insignificant? And yet who is there that can say they bring into his mind clear and determinate ideas of the good things in store for them that love God? It may perhaps be said that those words lay before us the clear and determinate abstract ideas of good in general and thing in general, but I am afraid it will be found that those very abstract ideas are every whit as remote from the comprehension of men as the particular pleasures of the saints in heaven. But, say you, those words of the Apostle must have some import they cannot be suppos'd to have been utter'd without all meaning and design whatsoever. I answer the saying is very weighty and carrys with it a great design, but it is not to raise in the minds of men the abstract ideas of thing or good nor yet the particular ideas of the joys of the blessed. The design is to make them more cheerfull and fervent in their duty. And how this may be compass'd without making the words 'good things' to stand for and mark out to our understandings any ideas either general or particular, I proceed to shew.

[2o] Upon mention of reward to a man for his pains and perseverance in any occupation whatsoever, it seems to me that divers things do ordinarily ensue. For there may be excited in his understanding an idea of the particular good thing proposed for a reward. There may also ensue thereupon an alacrity and stedfastness in fulfilling those conditions on which it is to be obtain'd, together with a zealous desire of serving and pleasing

the person in whose power it is to bestow that good thing. All these things, I say, may and often do follow upon the pronunciation of those words that declare the recompence. Now I do not see any reason why the latter may not happen without the former. What is it that hinders why a man may not be stirr'd up to diligence and zeal in his duty by being told he shall have a good thing for his reward, tho' at the same time there be excited in his mind no other idea than barely those of sounds or characters? (7) When he was a child he had frequently heard those words used to him to create in him an obedicnce to the commands of those that spoke them, and as he grew up he has found by experience that upon the mentioning of those words by an honest man it has been his interest to have doubled his zeal and activity for the service of that person. Thus there having grown up in his mind a customary connexion betwixt the hearing that proposition and being dispos'd to obey with chearfulness the injunctions that accompany it, methinks it might be made use of, tho' not to introduce into his mind any idea marked by the words 'good thing' yet to excite in him a willingness to perform that which is requir'd of him. And this seems to me all that is dcsign'd by the speaker except only wⁿ he intends those words shall signifie the idea of some particular thing, e.g. in the case I mentioned 'tis evident the Apostle never intended the words 'good things' should mark out to our understandings the ideas of those particular things our faculties never attain'd to. And yet I cannot think that he used them at random and without design. On the contrary it is my opinion that he used them to very good purpose namely to beget in us a chearfulness and zeal and perseverance in well doing, without any thought of introducing in to our minds the abstract idea of good thing. If any one will joyn cvcr so littlc reflexion of his own to what has been said I doubt not, it will evidently appear to him that general names are often used in the propriety of language without the speaker designing them for marks of ideas in his own which he would have them raise in the understanding of the hearer.

[20] Nor is it less certain that proper names themselves are not always spoken with a design to bring into our view the ideas of those particular things that are suppos'd to be annexed to them. For example, wⁿ a Schoolman tells you that Aristotle hath said it, think you that he intends thereby to excite in your imagination the idea of that particular man? All he means by it is only to dispose you to receive his opinion with that deference and sub-

mission that custom has annex'd to that name. When a man that has been accustom'd to resign his judgment to the authority of that philosopher shall in reading of a book meet with the letters that compose his name he forthwith yields his assent to the doctrine it was brought to support and that with such a quick and sudden glance of thought as it is impossible any idea either of the person or writings of that man should go before, so close and immediate a connexion has long custom establish'd betwixt the very word 'Aristotle' and the motions of assent and reverence in the minds of some men.

[20] I intreat the reader to reflect with himself, and see if it does not oft happen, either in hearing, or reading a discourse, that the passions of delight, love, hatred, admiration, disdain &c do not arise immediately in his mind upon the perception of certain words, without any ideas coming between. At first, indeed, the words might have occasion'd ideas that may be apt to produce those emotions of mind. But if I mistake not, it will be found that when language is once grown familiar to a man, the learning of the sounds or sight of the characters is oft immediately attended with those passions, which at first were wont to be produc'd, by the intervention of ideas that are now quite omitted. (8)

[20] From which it follows that the communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly suppos'd. There are other ends viz the raising of some passion the exciting to or deterring from an action, to which the former is in many cases barely subservient and sometimes entirely omitted when these can be obtain'd without it as, I think does not infrequently happen in the familiar use of language.

[o] I ask any man whether when he tells another that such an action is honourable and virtuous he has at that instant the abstract ideas of honour and virtue in his view; and whether in reality his intention be to raise those abstract ideas together with their agreement to the particular idea of that action in the understanding of him he speaks to. Or rather whether this be not his full purpose namely that those words should excite in the mind of the hearer an esteem of that particular action and stirr him up to the performance of it?

[o] Upon hearing the words lie &c rascal, indignation, revenge and the sudden motions of anger do instantly ensue in the minds of some men without their attending to the definition of those names or taking the least notice of the ideas that are suppos'd to be intromitted along with them. All that passion and

resentment having been by custom connected to those very sounds themselves and the manner of their utterance.

[o] It is plain therefore that a man may understand what is said to him without having a clear and determinate idea annexed to and marked by every particular word in the discourse he hears. Nay, he may perfectly understand it. For what is it I pray to understand perfectly, but only to understand all that is meant by the person that speaks? Which very oft is nothing more than barely to excite in his mind certain emotions without any thought of those ideas so much talk'd of and so little understood. For the truth whereof I appeal to every one's experience.

[o] I know not how this doctrine will go down with those philosophers who may be apt to give the titles of gibberish and jargon to all discourse whatsoever so far forth as the words contained in it are not made the signs of clear and determinate ideas, who think it nonsense for a man to assent to any proposition each term wherof doth not bring into his mind a clear and distinct idea, and tell us every pertinent word hath an idea which never fails to accompany it where tis rightly understood. Which opinion of theirs, how plausibly soever it might have been maintain'd by some seems to me to have introduced a great deal of difficulty and nonsense into the reasonings of men. Certainly nothing could be fitter to bring forth and cherish the doctrine of abstract ideas. For when men were indubitably conscious to themselves that many words they used did not denote any particular ideas, lest they should be thought altogether insignificant, they were of necessity driven into the opinion that they stood for general ones. (9)

[o] But more effectually to show the absurdity of an opinion that carries with it so great an appearance of clearness and strength of reason, but is withall most dangerous and destructive both to reason and religion, I shall, if I mistake not, in the progress of this work demonstrate there be names well known and familiar to men which tho' they mark and signify things, cannot be suppos'd to signify ideas of any sort either general or particular without the greatest nonsense and contradiction it being absolutely impossible that any intellect how exalted and comprehensive soever should frame ideas of those things. (10)

[21] We have, I think, shewn the impossibility of abstract ideas. We have consider'd what has been said in behalf of them by their ablest patrons. And endeavour'd to demonstrate they are of no use for those ends, to which they were thought necessary.

And, lastly, we have traced them to the source from whence they flow, which appears evidently to be language.

[21] Since therefore words have been discover'd to be so very apt to impose on the understandings of men, I am resolv'd in my reasonings, to make as little use of them as possibly I can. Whatever ideas I consider, I shall endeavour to take them bare and naked into my view, keeping out of my thoughts, so far as I am able, those names which long and constant use hath so strictly united to them.

[o] Let us conceive a solitary man, one born and bred in such a place of the world, and in such circumstances, as he shall never have had occasion to make use of universal signs for his ideas. That man shall have a constant train of particular ideas passing in his mind. Whatever he sees, hears, imagines, or any wise conceives is on all hands, even by the patrons of abstract ideas, granted to be particular. Let us withall suppose him under no necessity of labouring to secure him self from hunger and cold: but at full ease, naturally of good facultys but contemplative. Such a one I should take to be nearer the discovery of certain great and excellent truths yet unknown, than he that has had the education of the Schools, has been instructed in the ancient and modern philosophy, and by much reading and conversation has attain'd to the knowlege of those arts and sciences, that make such a noise in the learned world. It is true, the knowlege of our solitary philosopher is not like to be so very wide and extended, it being confin'd to those few particulars that come within his own observation. But then, if he is like to have less knowlege, he is withall like to have fewer mistakes than other men. (11)

[21] It cannot be deny'd that words are of excellent use, in that by their means that stock of knowlge, which has been purchas'd by the joyn't labours of inquisitive men in all ages and nations, may be drawn into the view, and made the possession of one single person. But there are some parts of learning which contain the knowlege of things the most noble and important of any within the reach of human reason, that have been so signally perplex'd and darken'd, by the abuse of words and general ways of speech, wherein they are deliver'd; that in the study thereof a man cannot be too much upon his guard, either in his private meditations, or in reading the writings, or hearing the discourses, of other men, to prevent his being cheated by the glibness and familiarity of speech into a belief that those words stand for ideas, which, in truth, stand for none at all. Which grand mistake, it is

almost incredible, what a mist and a darkness it has cast over the understandings of men, otherwise the most rational and clear-sighted.

[o] I shall therefore endeavour so far as I am able, to put my self in the position of the solitary philosopher. I will confine my thoughts and enquirys to the scene of my own particular ideas, from which I may expect to derive the following advantages.

[22] First, I shall be sure to get clear of all controversies purely verbal. The insisting on which has been a most fatal obstruction, to the growth of true and sound knowlge : and accordingly is at this day esteem'd as such, and made the great and just complaint of the wisest men.

[o] Secondly, 'tis reasonable to expect that hereby the trouble of sounding, or examining, or comprehcnding any notion may be very much abridg'd. For it oft happens that a notion, when it is cloathed with words, seems tedious and operose and hard to be conceiv'd, which yet being strip't of that garniture, the ideas shrink into a narrow compass, and are view'd almost by one glance of thought. (13)

[o] Thirdly, I shall have fewer objects to consider, than other men seem to have had. For that I find myself to want several of those supposed ideas, in contemplating of which the philosophers do usually spend much pains and study, nay even of those (which without doubt will appear very surprising) that pass for simple, particular ideas. It cannot be believ'd what a wonderfull emptyness and scarcity of ideas that man shall desery who will lay aside all use of words in his meditations.

[o] Fourthly, having remov'd the veil of words, I may expect to have a clearer prospect of the ideas that remain in my understanding. To behold the deformity of errore we need only undress it.

[22] Fifthly, this seemeth to be a sure means whereby to extricate myself out of that fine and subtile net of abstract ideas, which has so miserably perplex'd, and entangled the minds of men, and that with this peculiar circumstance, that by how much the finer and the more curious was the wit of any man, by so much the deeper was he like to be ensnar'd, and faster held therein. (14)

[22] Sixthly, so long as I confinc my contemplations to my ideas divested of words, I do not see how I can easily be mistaken. The objects I consider I perfectly and adequately know. I cannot be deceiv'd, in thinking I have an idea which I have not. Nor, on the other hand, can I be ignorant of any idea that I have.

It is not possible for me to think, any ideas are alike or unlike which are not truly so. To discern the agreements and disagreements there are between my ideas, to see what simple ideas are included in any complex idea, and whatnot, all this I can do without being taught by another there being requisite thereto nothing more than an attentive perception of what passes in my own understanding. (15)

[23] But the attainment of all these advantages does presuppose an entire deliverance from the deception of words, which I dare not promise my self. So difficult a thing it is, to dissolve a union so early begun, and confirm'd by so long a habit, as that betwixt words and ideas.

[23] Which difficulty seems to have been very much enreas'd by the opinion of abstract ideas. For so long as men thought that abstract ideas were annexed to their words, it does not seem strange they should use words for ideas. It being found an impracticable thing, to lay aside the word, and retain the abstract idea in the mind, which in it self was perfectly inconceivable. This made it necessary for them, to reason and meditate about words, to which they suppos'd abstract ideas were connected, and by means whereof, they thought those ideas could be conceiv'd, tho' they could not without them. But surely those ideas ought to be suspected, that cannot endure the light without a covering.

[o] Another thing which makes words and ideas thought much more inseparable than in truth they are, is the opinion that every name stands for an idea. Now it is no wonder, that men should fatigue themselves in vain, and find it a very difficult undertaking when they endeavour'd to strip and take a view of the ideas marked by those words, which in truth mark none at all. As I have already shewn many names often do not even when they are not altogether insignificant and I shall more fully shew it hereafter. (16)

[23] These seem to me the principal causes why those men that have so emphatically recommended to others, the laying aside the use of words in their meditations, and contemplating their bare ideas, have yct been so little able to perform it themselves. Of late many have been very sensible of the absurd opinions, and insignificant disputes, that grow out of the abuse of words. In order to redress these evils, they advise well that we attend to the ideas that are signified, and draw of our attention from the words that signify them. But how good soever this advice may be, that they have given other men, it is plain they

little regarded it themselves. So long as they thought, the only immediate use of words was to signifie ideas and that the immedieate signification of every general name, was a determinate, abstract idea.

[24] Which having been shewn to be mistakes, a man may now, with much grreater ease, deliver himself from the imposture of words. He that knows he hath no other than particular idcas, will not puzzle himself in vain, to find out and conceive the abstract idea annexed to any name. And he that knows names when made use of in the propriety of language do not always stand for ideas, will spare himself the labour of looking for ideas where there are none to be had. Those obstacles being now remov'd I earnestly desire that every one would use his utmost endeavours to attain to a clear and naked view of the ideas he would consider, having separated from them all that varnish and mist of words, which so fatally blinds the judgement, and dissipates the attention of men.

[24] This is, I am confident, the shortest way to knowlege, and cannot cost too much pains in coming at. In vain do we extend our view into the heavens, and rake into the entrails of the earth. In vain do we consult the writings and discourses of learned men, and trace the dark footsteps of antiquity. We need only draw the curtain of words, to behold the fairest tree of knowlege whose fruit is excellent and within the reach of any man to pluck it.

[25] Unless we take care to clear the first principles of knowlege from the cheat of words, we may make infinite reasonings upon them to no purpose. We may lose our selves in consequences, and be never the wiser. The farther we go, we shall only lose ourselves the more irrecoverably, and be the deeper entangled in difficultics and mistakes.

[25] I do therefore intreat whoever designs to read the following sheets, that he would make my words the occasion of his own thinking, and endeavour to attain to the same train of thoughts in reading, that I had in writing them. (17) By this means it will be easy for him to discover the truth or falsity of what I say. He will be out of all danger of being decciv'd by my words. And I do not see, what inducement he can have to err, in considering his own naked, undisguised ideas.

[o] That I may contribute, so far as in me lies, to expose my thoughts fairly to the understanding of the reader, I shall throughout endeavour to express my self in the clearest, plainest, and

most familiar manner. I shall abstain from all flourish and pomp of words, all hard and unusual terms which are commonly pretended by those that use them to cover a sense intricate and abstracted and sublime. I pretend not to treat of any thing but what is obvious and accommodated to the understanding of every reasonable man. (18)

Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous

The design of which is plainly to demonstrate the reality and perfection of human knowledge, the incorporeal nature of the soul, and the immediate providence of a Deity : in opposition to Sceptics and Atheists. Also to open a method for rendering the Sciences more easy, useful, and compendious.

First printed in 1713

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

IN January 1713 Berkeley, leaving Ireland for the first time, went to London, with the manuscript of the *Three Dialogues* in his luggage. To see it through the press was, he told Percival (letter of 16th April 1713), the purpose of the visit. The book came out in May. Not until 1725 was there a re-issue, styled the 'second edition' (the original sheets with a new title page); it also was published in London. One further edition, not styled 'third,' although the text had been revised, came from Berkeley's hand in 1734; it was the second part of a volume that contained as its first part the second edition of the *Principles*. Thereafter and until the end of the nineteenth century there were only two separate reprints, one in 1776 (London), the other in 1893 (Calcutta; second edition, 1897 Allahabad). All the editions of his collected works included it. The first translation was into French (1750, Amsterdam), and the second was made from this into German (1756, Rostock). Since then there have been two other French versions, two other German ones, and versions in Czech, Italian, Norwegian, and Polish.

The text here printed (including punctuation and italics) is that of 1734, with the earlier variants noted at the foot of the page.

Our scanty records suggest that the *Dialogues* attracted almost as little attention as the *Principles* had done. The small circle that had heard of Berkeley's philosophy apparently found it neither attractive nor provocative, but simply disconcerting, or else regarded it as a *jeu d'esprit* that would have been entertaining if only it had not called for some effort of thought. The almost entire absence of contemporary references to one of the finest literary gems of our philosophical heritage requires some such explanation. Percival was indulging in a little leg-pulling when he wrote, in a wholly playful letter of 14th May 1713: 'I hear your book is printed though not yet published, and that your opinion has gained ground among the learned; that Mr. Addison is come over to you; and now what seemed shocking at first is become so familiar that others envy you the discovery and make

it their own.'¹ Abroad, the first edition was reviewed in the *Journal Littéraire* in 1715 (The Hague, vol. I, pp. 147-60), and the second edition in the *Acta Eruditorum* of August 1727 (Leipzig, pp. 380-3).

COMPARISON WITH THE 'PRINCIPLES'

The new work was written because the *Principles* had failed not only to win converts but even to provoke discussion. Unlike Hume, Berkeley did not recoil with misgivings when his first philosophical venture fell flat ; he now refers back to it without apology, as a treatise 'wherein divers notions advanced in these Dialogues are farther pursued, or placed in different lights, and other points handled which naturally tend to confirm and illustrate them' (Preface). The later work, then, was not intended to supplant the earlier one, and in fairness to Berkeley we cannot allow it to do so. The *Principles* remains, from a technical point of view, the fullest and most careful statement of his doctrine, the final compendium of it as well as the first essay. Yct it had taxed no brains, won no hearts, brought no one back to religion, put no brake on the current looseness of belief and conduct, and set no tongues talking or pens writing either in defence or in attack. Why ? Berkeley seems to have fastened on two external features : it was written for scholars, and it was not published in London. At any rate, what he in fact did was to make a bid for a wider hearing by rewriting the treatise for the general educated public, and by publishing the new composition in London. The address to a larger audience explains, besides the change of literary form, several changes of substance, such as the expansion of points that could be taken for granted before, the omission of others that, if treated at all, would have had to be treated with some technicality, the resort to paedagogical accommodations (e.g. the argument in Dial. I against the 'external' reality of sensory qualities assumes

¹ The final clause is a reference to Arthur Collier's *Clavis Universalis*, another argued confession of immaterialism, which also appeared in 1713. There is no evidence that Collier owed anything to the *Principles* ; he himself speaks of 'a ten years' pause and deliberation' before publishing his work. He makes a fugitive reference to the *Dialogues* in his *Specimen of True Philosophy* (1730). The volume containing the 1756 German translation of the *Dialogues* includes a translation of the *Clavis*. Collier cannot be classed with Malebranche and Norris or with Berkeley. On him see Sir William Hamilton, *Discussions* (1852), ch. vi ('Idealism'), G. A. Johnston, *The Development of Berkeley's Philosophy* (1923), Appendix I, and J. H. Muirhead, *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy* (1931), Pt. I, ch. vi.

the existence of 'material' things), and the greater insistence on the closeness of the immaterialist theory to the commonsense view of corporeal things (as directly perceived, and as really having all the properties perceived). The *Dialogues* is consequently not the whole of his philosophy, and not even the whole of Part I, but is a semi-popular introduction to this—a perfect introduction, for which every student should be grateful.

We are not, then, to look in the *Dialogues* for a development of his doctrine. The aim was not progression but simpler exposition, and propagation. Berkeley tells us in the Preface that he set himself 'to treat more clearly and fully of certain principles . . . and to place them in a new light,' without requiring of his readers any acquaintance with the earlier and more solid, work. The 'new light' appears to come from the more popular approach—the devising of a dialogue of statement, objection, question and answer, the use of an easy conversational style, the expansion of his former pregnant brevities, and the exposition of the philosophical commonplaces that could be simply stated or alluded to in the *Principles*. The ground covered is that of the first half of the *Principles*, sections 1–84, the topics of the second half being merely touched on very lightly here and there, or summarily referred to in the conclusion, partly because any fuller statement would have led him into the technicalities of the new physics and mathematics, and partly because some of the questions were awaiting investigation in the projected further parts of the *Principles*. The same order of topics is followed on the whole, the departures being due for the most part to the artistic exigencies of representing conversation, in which transitions of thought are not naturally very logical. The looseness is most evident in Dialogue III, where the objections are not deployed in a strategic way, but seem to spring up impulsively, as they certainly would if Hylas were a real person.

The most striking omission is the absence of any passage corresponding to the fairly long Introduction to the *Principles*, the now famous attack on abstract 'ideas.' The omission indicates no abatement of doctrine, for in Dialogue I (p. 193), for example, extension as such—*i.e.* without sensory specification—is dismissed as an illicit abstraction, and the impossibility of separating primary qualities from secondary ones is adduced as a clinching proof that where the latter are the former must be also; and in Dialogue II (p. 214), one reason given for dismissing Malebranche is that 'he builds on the most abstract general'

ideas, which I entirely disclaim.' The most striking expansion is on the subject of the primary and secondary qualities : the seven sections of the *Principles* (9-15) are enlarged into what may be regarded as a *locus classicus* on the thorny theme. He is particularly full on the secondary qualities, elucidating for the general reader what almost every scientist and philosopher of the day had been taught by Galileo, Descartes, and Robert Boyle.¹ There is a short passage on optical illusions (p. 238), a topic not adverted to in the *Principles* (though *cp.* Sect. 58), presumably because it had been considered in the *Essay on Vision*. It is in the *Dialogues*, by the way, that Berkeley first calls his theory 'immaterialism.'²

On spirit or mind there are three passages of special interest. The first (p. 232*f*) is the statement and refutation of an objection that is generally supposed, by a strange oversight (perhaps because Berkeley is more read about than read), to have been originated by Hume, namely, that the arguments brought by Berkeley against the concept of material substance tell equally against the concept of spiritual substance. The reply, which seems to me to be entirely right, is that there is no parity : not one of Berkeley's criticisms of the allegation of material substance even has meaning, still less force, when applied to the concept of a spiritual subject. The passage, which is new only in its explicitness (for the point is clearly inferrible from what he wrote about mind in the *Principles*), was added in the 1734 edition.

The second passage is his proof of the existence of God (p. 212), to which he now gives a new turn. In the *Principles* (Sect. 29) God was adduced as the *cause* of our percepts, and of our perceptual experiences, and only incidentally (Sects. 48 and 91) is He brought in as the *upholder* of sensory things when they are not being perceived by us. The emphasis is now transposed : the argument is that the existence of God must be granted in order to account for the continuous existence of the corporal world. God is the permanent subject of the natural order ; the notion of God as cause is slipped in in a quite casual way. The change is an improvement, given Berkeley's position. In his earlier statement he was

¹ On the history of the distinction of the two classes of sensory qualities see Sir William Hamilton's long and erudite Note D in his edition of *The Works of Thomas Reid* (6th ed., pp. 825-75). ² Pages 255, 257, 259. In the *Philosophical Commentaries* he had referred to it early as 'the immaterial hypothesis' (entry 19), and had used the term 'immateriality' (entry 71). In the *Principles* he spoke of his opponents as 'the materialists' (Sects. 18, 19, 47, 74), and does so again in the *Dialogues*.

merely giving a variant of the old cosmological proof, and not his own variant, but Descartes'. In the later statement he is keeping consistently to the line of thought required by his *esse-percipi* axiom, and in doing so he has given us what is, so far as I am aware, an entirely new proof—new because his axiom was new—in the long sequence of philosophico-theological theorizing. He draws attention to its novelty : ' Men commonly believe that all things are known or perceived by God, because they believe the being of a God ; whereas I, on the other side, immediately and necessarily conclude the being of a God because all sensible things must be perceived by Him.'

In the third passage (pp. 213-5) Berkeley distinguishes his theory from that of Malebranche. In the *Principles* he had contented himself with a sentence (that we see God directly and all things in Him 'is to me incomprehensible,' Sect. 148), and with a covert reference (Sect. 82). In the meantime, however, his own theory that sense-given 'ideas' are 'in' the mind of God had given rise to the impression that he was a disciple of Malebranche, or of the latter's English follower, John Norris. As early as November 1710 Percival reported to him that Clarke and Whiston had this impression, and in his reply Berkeley emphatically denied any such connection. Presumably others had fallen into the same error, assuming identity of doctrine from similarity of phrase.¹ He therefore seized the opportunity of making clear in the *Dialogues* the differences that divided him from the French thinker. They are as radical as he declares them to be. Malebranche regarded sensations as modifications of the mind that has them, and as cognitively worthless, indeed as deceitful. Consequently he sought the physical outside the sensory, but because of his Cartesian dualism he was precluded from allowing that it could affect our minds. Since only reason knows, and since its objects are abstract, and since it cannot have even cognitive contact with the corporeal, all that it can apprehend is 'intelligible matter,' the essences or Ideas of material things in the mind of God, where we apprehend them by rational intuition. The material world itself, inaccessible, inert, and functionless, can give no evidence of itself ; we believe it because of a 'natural propensity' to do so, and we ought to

¹ The reviewer of the *Dialogues* in the *Acta Eruditorum* still thought so : 'Ita Berkeleius paradoxon suum de non-existentia materiae speciose satis defendit, de cuius veritate alii judicent ; de origine, quicquid Autor dissimulet, sic sentimus, ex Cartesii, Malebranchii & Spinosae philosophiarum mixtura prognatum hoc λεβικόν θηρίον.'

believe it because of the testimony of Scripture. Every one of these positions is contrary, in spirit as well as in meaning, to Berkeley's. For the latter, sense is trustworthy ; the sensory is not a mode of anything, of mind or of matter, but purely an object to a subject ; it is the only physical realm there is, and we know it directly, not representatively and therefore uncertainly ; it is the created object of God's awareness, not an Idea that is a part of His nature, so that in perceiving it we do not look into Him, but can only infer Him, necessarily, from it.¹ Malebranche's immaterialism includes absolute matter and excludes the sensory ; Berkeley's the converse. But both alike include occasionalism ? Yes ; but in the one this means that the only cause is God, in the other that the only cause is spirit, including therefore the finite spirit. 'We move our legs ourselves,' Berkeley writes in his *Philosophical Commentaries* (entry 548) ; "'tis we that will their movement. Herein I differ from Malebranche.'²

THE DIALOGUE-FORM

In saying that this work is a perfect introduction to Berkeley's philosophy, I had in mind its unclouded perspicuity, its lovely lucidity, its union of grace and reason, but most of all its writer's magisterially easy handling of the most difficult of literary prose-forms. The dialogue-form suited his mentality, for by instinct he thought polemically, in terms of objection and answer, projecting himself as his own opponent and bubbling with possible criticisms against his own case, yet all the time maintaining his singular serenity. Nevertheless it was a daring thing to attempt that form, which to succeed must be studiously unstudied, have all the life and none of the faults of real conversation, be like talk that never was on

¹ Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, I xii 11 : "Omnia dicimus in Deo videre et secundum ipsum omnia judicare, in quantum per participationem sui luminis omnia cognoscimus et dijudicamus . . . sicut etiam omnia sensibilia dicimus videre et judicare in sole, id est per lumen solis. Sicut ergo ad videndum aliquid sensibiliter non est necesse quod videatur substantia solis, ita ad videndum aliquid intelligibiliter non est necessarium quod videatur essentia Dei." ² Cf. *Princ.*, Sects. 116 and 147, and *Dialogues*, III (below, p. 237). In the *Philosophical Commentaries* Malebranche is mentioned by name in fourteen entries (230, 255, 257, 265, 269, 288, 358, 388, 424, 548, 686, 800, 818, 888). There is a passing reference in *Alciphron*, Dial. IV 14. On the relation between the two thinkers see A. A. Luce's *Berkeley and Malebranche* (1934), the pioneer study ; also his article 'Malebranche et le Trinity College de Dublin' in *Revue Philosophique*, 1938, pp. 147-81, and my article 'Malebranche and Berkeley' in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 1938, pp. 121-42.

land or sea and yet seem like real talk. Few writers have adopted it, and they have left us only a few successful examples. The earliest of these, the Dialogues of Plato, remain the best, partly, no doubt, because it was Plato that wrote them, but partly also because he was reared in a city whose freemen lived by conversation. Rome being different from Athens in this as in so many other respects, the Latin tongue had to wait for Erasmus before it could be made to chat brilliantly. It is no accident that in English literature the dialogue first came forward confidently in the eighteenth century, for this may well be called our Age of Conversation, when our literary speech shed both its purple and its pedantry. In Berkeley's day Addison, for example, wrote his *Dialogues on Ancient Medals* (c. 1703; published posthumously), and Shaftesbury used the form for *The Moralists* (1709).¹ Later, Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (1779) came from 'the Athens of the North.' Earlier, there had been the *Divine Dialogues* of Henry More (1668).

Bishop Hurd, who edited Addison, expressed the judgment that the two writings of Addison and Shaftesbury and Berkeley's *Alciphron* were the only dialogues in English worth mentioning. The *Three Dialogues* deserve to be added, for they exhibit the complete subjection of a most unpromising subject-matter to crystal-clear thinking, pellucid style, imaginative sympathy, argumentative resourcefulness, and the liveliness of pointed questioning and quick-witted response. In *Alciphron* Berkeley had the advantage of a warm human theme, providing opportunities for characterization and eloquence. In the *Dialogues* there is pure argumentation from end to end, about an intrinsically dull theme of epistemology, yet it is all as mobile as quicksilver and as vivacious as educated talk at its best. The dull stuff glows. In the complete triumph of his art over his matter Berkeley has here given us the first conspicuously successful philosophical dialogue in English. That is the historic place of the *Dialogues* in our literature. His model was not Shaftesbury, and not Malebranche,² the paragon for French philosophical dialogue,

¹ It is significant that Shaftesbury, in his *Characteristics*, feels that he must excuse himself for not adopting the dialogue-form: this, he writes, "at present lies so low, and is used only now and then, in our party-pamphlets, or new-fashioned theological essays. For of late, it seems, the manner has been introduced into Church controversy, with an attempt of railing and humour, as a more successful method of dealing with heresy and infidelity" (6th ed., 1737, p. 290). ² *Entretiens sur la Métaphysique*, 1687; *Entretien d'un Philosophe Chrétien et d'un Philosophe Chinois*, 1708.

whom Berkeley had closely read, but the great Plato himself, with whom he alone, in this sphere of comparison, can stand. When he was writing the *Dialogues*, he was the Junior Lecturer in Greek in his college.¹

A prompt tribute from Berkeley's friend Sir John Percival deserves to be quoted. It is in a letter dated 18th July 1713. 'I have read your last book through and through, and I think with as much application as I ever did any. The new method you took by way of dialogue, I am satisfied has made your meaning much easier understood, and was the properest course you could use in such an argument, where prejudice against the novelty of it was sure to raise numberless objections that could not anyway so easily as by dialogue be either made or answered. It is not common for men possessed of a new opinion to raise so many arguments against it as you have done, whether it be for want of ingenuity, and a partiality to themselves, that they won't see their notions in all lights to be viewed, or else because they are blinded, and really do not perceive the weight and number of reasons against them; but I speak with all sincerity, I am equally surprised at the number of objections you bring and the satisfactory answers you give afterwards, and I declare I am much more of your opinion than I was before.'

ANALYSIS OF THE 'DIALOGUES'

We are given what purports to be conversation on three successive days between Hylas ('Materialist') and Philonous ('Mind-lover'). The former is a layman of sufficient general education to be roughly cognisant of the latest scientific and philosophical theories of the corporeal world, the truth of which he takes for granted. He represents the view that the immediate objects of perception are subjective ideas which are the effects and, with certain limitations, the images, of realities that are corporeal, inaccessible to sense, and self-existent except for their dependence on the creative and annihilating power of God. His belief in God and in the Christian revelation is common ground with Philonous. The latter represents Berkeley's own view that the world immediately perceived in sense is the only corporeal world there is, and that its whole mode of existence is as an

¹ The sale-catalogue of the Berkeleys' family library (1796) lists four different editions of the works of Plato. If we may judge from the directions of interest of Berkeley's son and grandson, the volumes had probably not been theirs.

object of consciousness, fleetingly of ours and constantly of God's.

In the following analysis I ignore the quick interplay of these two minds and all other questions of artistic structure, and only give the logical pattern of the arguments.

DIALOGUE I. There are no objects of sense, or anything like them, apart from mind. Corporeal things are 'ideas.' Belief in material substance entails the denial of the reality of sensible things.

(a) Secondary qualities are 'ideas,' objects of mind, not properties of extra-mcnthal and mindless things (pp. 174-87).

For heat (pp. 175-9), tastes (pp. 179*f*), and smells (pp. 180*f*) are inseparable from pleasure and pain ; and are also, along with sounds (pp. 181-3) and colours (pp. 183-7), relative to the state or position of the percipient, *i.e.* they change with the percipient when the supposed external thing is supposedly unchanged.

(b) Primary qualities are also 'ideas' (pp. 187-94).

For they show a similar relativity to the percipient—magnitude and shape (pp. 188-90), motion (p. 190), solidity (p. 191).

Impossible abstractions—of absolute from sensible extension ; of absolute from sensible motion ; of secondary from primary qualities, and *vice versa*, so that, the one class being admitted to be 'ideas,' the other class must also be admitted to be (pp. 192-4).

(c) There is nothing independent of mind that resembles 'ideas' (pp. 194-207).

We cannot distinguish in sensation an act of mind and an external object, for in sensing we are passive, and the object is always a sensory quality (pp. 194-7).

Sensory qualitics do not require the concept of material substance as their correlative, for this concept is incoherent : being by definition distinct from all accidents, and therefore from extension, substance cannot literally be 'under' accidents, and figuratively there is no examinable meaning (pp. 197-9).

It is impossible to think of a sensory thing as existing independently of mind (pp. 199-200).

We do not actually see things as external ; though even if externality were a datum it would still, as has been proved above, be an 'idea' (pp. 201-2).

An 'idea' is not *id quo* but *id quod percipitur* ; sense has but one kind of object, always immediate (pp. 203-5).

The existence of material things as independent originals of the objects of sense cannot be allowed even as a bare possibility, for, being *ex hypothesi* stable and insensible, they cannot be correspondent to changing and sensible 'ideas' (pp. 205-6).

(d) Conclusion. Since no sensory objects, or anything like them, can exist independently of mind, it is the usual view, which makes the reality of those objects consist in the existence of something material out of relation to mind, that involves scepticism of the sensible world, and not the view that makes the reality of this consist quite simply in its being perceived (pp. 206-7).

DIALOGUE II. On the causation of 'ideas.' Only the existence of God explains the sensible world. Material substance explains nothing, and its existence is an impossibility.

(a) There is no physiological explanation of 'ideas.' The alleged explanation involves the admitted inconceivability of matter's acting on mind. In any case, the brain, being a complex of 'ideas,' cannot itself be the cause of all other 'ideas,' or of any (pp. 208-10).

(b) The only explanation is an infinite mind. Since the sensible world is real, because not imagined but given, and since nevertheless it can exist only as an object, we must infer another mind as its abiding subject; and to account for the vastness, intricacy, regularity, unity, and beauty of the world, that mind must be infinitely powerful, wise, and good (pp. 210-3).

This view differs from Malebranche's doctrine of 'seeing all things in God,' which posits a matter that is absolute and functionless, makes the senses deceptive, and builds on abstract 'ideas' (pp. 213-5).

(c) Material substance cannot be inferred from 'ideas.'

Not as cause (even subordinate to God), operating through motion—for, being material, it could not produce an experience, and being inert it could not produce anything; and motion is itself only an 'idea.' The only activity, and therefore the only cause, is volition (pp. 216-7).

Not as instrument (of God)—for, being insensible, it has no assignable properties or powers; and an instrument is required only when volition alone is not enough, which cannot be said of God (pp. 217-9).

Nor as occasion—for the regularities of Nature are directly and sufficiently explained by the power and wisdom of God (pp. 219-21).

Nor as an abstractly possible entity—for it cannot be perceived, or inferred, or given any attributes (pp. 221–4).

Nor to account for the reality of sensible things—for this is sufficiently proved by their being perceived, and could not be proved by the supposition of insensible originals (p. 224).

Material substance is impossible, for the term means either something self-contradictory (corporeal and therefore sensory, yet not sensible; or inert, yet causative), or nothing at all (pp. 224–6).

DIALOGUE III. Miscellaneous objections (Hylas now becoming the questioner). These follow an introduction in which the argument against the hypothesis of material substance, and the positive case for immaterialism, are summarized (pp. 227–31).

(a) The argument against material substance applies equally against spiritual substance. No; there is no parity, for the 'idea' of the former is either self-contradictory or empty, whereas the 'notion' of the latter is neither, and is vouched for by experience (pp. 231–4).

(b) If the *esse* of sensible things were the same as their *percipi*, it would not have become a commonplace to distinguish them, sensible things would have no existence outside the perceiver's mind, and there would be no room for the distinction between realities and mere images. All these consequents are wrong: the ordinary man believes in the existence of sensible things only because he perceives them; immaterialism denies only their existence independent of all mind whatever; and immaterialism is as much entitled as any other theory to build on the empirically given differences between sensations and images (pp. 234–5).

(c) It is paradoxical to call things 'ideas.' True, the term is odd, but is required as indicating necessary relation to mind (pp. 235–6).

(d) To deny physical causes is extravagant, and also makes God the author of all sins that have a physical expression. No more extravagant than the theory that makes the inert and mindless the cause of our perceptions. The argument from sin would apply equally if God operated through matter; but immaterialism declares not that God but that spirit is the only cause, allowing a derivative power to finite spirits. In any case, sin lies in the will, not in the physical action (pp. 236–7).

(e) Belief in material substance is universal. No; it is immaterialism that agrees with the common man, in maintaining

the reality of sensible things, adding only that these are tied to mind, not, however, as mode or property but as object (pp. 237-8).

(f) If the sensed were always real, there could be no illusion. No ; for the error lies not in sense but in inference (p. 238).

(g) It is a mere affair of naming whether we call the external cause of our 'ideas' matter, mind, or a *tertium quid*. No ; not being extended, it cannot be called matter, and being active, and the subject of 'ideas,' it must be called mind (pp. 239-40).

(h) Since pain is sensorily given, it must be an 'idea' in God's mind, which would be an imperfection. No ; it can be only known by God, not felt, for it does not come against His will ; and He has no bodily senses (pp. 240-1).

(i) The physicists cannot dispense with the concept of material substance. No ; they neither demonstrate nor need it, their whole subject-matter being sensory (pp. 241-3).

(j) Belief in matter is so natural that God must be charged with deceiving us ; novel theories are dangerous. But matter is neither revealed nor naturally evident ; and not belief but disbelief in it, involving distrust of the senses, is what shocks common sense (pp. 243-5).

(k) If the senses are to be trusted, why does not the same thing always appear the same ? Because there is no underlying same thing, the supposition that there is being the very ground of the distrust of the senses. Then no two perceivers ever see the same thing ? Their perceptions are the same so far as there is no perceptible difference ; but the definition of identity is an affair of controversy, and the difficulty bears equally on the usual theory of representative perception (pp. 245-8).

(l) The immaterialist reply to scepticism amounts to no more than the truism that we really do have sensations, and this raises the question how extended objects can exist in an unextended mind. Well, truism or no, corporeal things are exhaustively analyzable into sense-given qualities ; and in insisting that these are 'in' mind, we are using a metaphor, which our materialist vocabulary makes unavoidable, parallels being the use of 'comprehending' and 'reflecting' for mental acts (pp. 249-50).

(m) Immaterialism is inconsistent with the Scriptural account and doctrine of Creation. No ; Creation means that things eternally known by God were made perceptible to created spirits, not that unknown substances came into being. On any theory

there is an enigma in Creation, but the appearance of 'ideas' is less puzzling than the production of matter. Moreover, belief in a matter independent of mind has given rise to the theory that matter is co-eternal with God, which is a denial of Creation (pp. 250-6).

(n) Conclusion. The advantages of the theory for religion, morals, physics, metaphysics, and mathematics. Three recurrent fallacies in the preceding objections. The novelty of immaterialism consists in uniting the naïve view that the objects of sense are the corporeal realities with the current philosophical theory that they are ideas in mind (pp. 257-63).

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Three Dialogues between
Hylas and Philonous

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DEDICATION¹
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The Lord Berkeley of Stratton

MASTER OF THE ROLLS IN THE KINGDOM OF IRELAND,
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER, AND ONE
OF THE LORDS OF HER MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE
PRIVY-COUNCIL

MY LORD,

The virtue, learning, and good sense, which are acknowledged to distinguish your character, would tempt me to indulge myself the pleasure men naturally take, in giving applause to those, whom they esteem and honour: and it should seem of importance to the subjects of Great Britain, that they knew, the eminent share you enjoy in the favour of your Sovereign, and the honours she has conferred upon you, have not been owing to any application from Your Lordship, but entirely to Her Majesty's own thought, arising from a sense of your personal merit, and an inclination to reward it. But as your name is prefixed to this treatise, with an intention to do honour to myself alone, I shall only say, that I am encouraged, by the favour you have treated me with, to address these papers to Your Lordship. And I was the more ambitious of doing this, because a philosophical treatise could not so properly be addressed to any one, as to a person of Your Lordship's character, who, to your other valuable distinctions, have added the knowledge and relish of philosophy. I am, with the greatest respect,

*My Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient, and
most humble servant,*

GEORGE BERKELEY.

¹ [In editions A and B only. To William, the fourth Baron (c. 1663-1741), Berkeley was introduced at Court by Swift in 1713 (*Journal to Stella*, under April 12). The first Baron had been Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 1670-72. The Berkeleys of Stratton were distantly connected with the Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle. There is a little evidence that George Berkeley was related to the second of these families; when he became Bishop of Cloyne, he impaled the arms of his see with theirs.—Ed.]

THE PREFACE ¹

Though it seems the general opinion of the world, no less than the design of Nature and Providence, that the end of speculation be practice, or the improvement and regulation of our lives and actions ; yet those, who are most addicted to speculative studies, seem as generally of another mind. And, indeed, if we consider the pains that have been taken, to perplex the plainest things, that distrust of the senses, those doubts and scruples, those abstractions and refinements that occur in the very entrance of the sciences ; it will not seem strange, that men of leisure and curiosity should lay themselves out in fruitless disquisitions, without descending to the practical parts of life, or informing themselves in the more necessary and important parts of knowledge.

Upon the common principles of philosophers, we are not assured of the existence of things from their being perceived. And we are taught to distinguish their real nature from that which falls under our senses. Hence arise scepticism and paradoxes. It is not enough, that we see and feel, that we taste and smell a thing. Its true nature, its absolute external entity, is still concealed. For, though it be the fiction of our own brain, we have made it inaccessible to all our faculties. Sense is fallacious, reason defective. We spend our lives in doubting of those things which other men evidently know, and believing those things which they laugh at, and despise.

In order, therefore, to divert the busy mind of man from vain researches, it seemed necessary to inquire into the source of its perplexities ; and, if possible, to lay down such principles, as, by an easy solution of them, together with their own native evidence, may, at once, recommend themselves for genuine to the mind, and rescue it from those endless pursuits it is engaged in. Which, with a plain demonstration of the immediate Providence of an all-seeing God, and the natural immortality of the soul, should seem the readiest preparation, as well as the strongest motive, to the study and practice of virtue.

This design I proposed, in the First Part of a Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, published in the year 1710. But, before I proceed to publish the Second Part, I thought it requisite to treat more clearly and fully of certain principles laid down in the First,

¹ [In editions A and B only.—Ed.]

and to place them in a new light. Which is the business of the following Dialogues.

In this treatise, which does not presuppose in the reader, any knowledge of what was contained in the former, it has been my aim to introduce the notions I advance, into the mind, in the most easy and familiar manner ; especially, because they carry with them a great opposition to the prejudices of philosophers, which have so far prevailed against the common sense and natural notions of mankind.

If the principles, which I here endeavour to propagate, are admitted for true ; the consequences which, I think, evidently flow from thence, are, that atheism and scepticism will be utterly destroyed, many intricate points made plain, great difficulties solved, several useless parts of science retrenched, speculation referred to practice, and men reduced from paradoxes to common sense.

And although it may, perhaps, seem an uneasy reflexion to some, that when they have taken a circuit through so many refined and unvulgar notions, they should at last come to think like other men : yet, methinks, this return to the simple dictates of Nature, after having wandered through the wild mazes of philosophy, is not unpleasant. It is like coming home from a long voyage : a man reflects with pleasure on the many difficulties and perplexities he has passed through, sets his heart at ease, and enjoys himself with more satisfaction for the future.

As it was my intention to convince sceptics and infidels by reason, so it has been my endeavour strictly to observe the most rigid laws of reasoning. And, to an impartial reader, I hope, it will be manifest, that the sublime notion of a God, and the comfortable expectation of immortality, do naturally arise from a close and methodical application of thought : whatever may be the result of that loose, rambling way, not altogether improperly termed free-thinking, by certain libertines in thought, who can no more endure the restraints of logic, than those of religion, or government.

It will, perhaps, be objected to my design, that so far as it tends to ease the mind of difficult and useless inquiries, it can affect only a few speculative persons ; but, if by their speculations rightly placed, the study of morality and the Law of Nature were brought more into fashion among men of parts and genius, the discouragements that draw to scepticism removed, the measures of right and wrong accurately defined, and the principles of natural religion reduced into regular systems, as artfully disposed and clearly connected as those of some other sciences : there are grounds to think, these effects would not only have a gradual influence in repairing the too much defaced sense of virtue in the world ; but also, by shewing, that such parts of revelation, as lie within the reach of human inquiry, are most agreeable to right reason, would dispose all prudent,

unprejudiced persons, to a modest and wary treatment of those sacred mysteries, which are above the comprehension of our faculties.

It remains, that I desire the reader to withhold his censure of these Dialogues, till he has read them through. Otherwise, he may lay them aside in a mistake of their design, or on account of difficulties or objections which he would find answered in the sequel. A treatise of this nature would require to be once read over coherently, in order to comprehend its design, the proofs, solution of difficulties, and the connexion and disposition of its parts. If it be thought to deserve a second reading ; this, I imagine, will make the entire scheme very plain : especially, if recourse be had to an Essay I wrote, some years since, upon vision, and the Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge. Wherein divers notions advanced in these Dialogues, are farther pursued, or placed in different lights, and other points handled, which naturally tend to confirm and illustrate them.

THREE DIALOGUES BETWEEN HYLAS AND PHILONOUS

THE FIRST DIALOGUE

PHILONOUS. Good Morrow, Hylas : I did not expect to find you abroad so early.

HYLAS. It is indeed something unusual ; but my thoughts were so taken up with a subject I was discoursing of last night, that finding I could not sleep, I resolved to rise and take a turn in the garden.

PHILONOUS. It happened well, to let you see what innocent and agreeable pleasures you lose every morning. Can there be a pleasanter time of the day, or a more delightful season of the year ? That purple sky, these wild but sweet notes of birds, ^{1c} the fragrant bloom upon the trees and flowers, the gentle influence of the rising sun, these and a thousand nameless beauties of nature inspire the soul with secret transports ; its faculties too being at this time fresh and lively, are fit for those meditations, which the solitude of a garden and tranquillity of the morning naturally dispose us to. But I am afraid I interrupt your thoughts : for you seemed very intent on something.

HYLAS. It is true, I was, and shall be obliged to you if you will permit me to go on in the same vein ; not that I would by any means deprive my self of your company, for my thoughts always ^{2c} flow more easily in conversation with a friend, than when I am alone : but my request is, that you would suffer me to impart my reflexions to you.

PHILONOUS. With all my heart, it is what I should have requested myself, if you had not prevented me.

HYLAS. I was considering the odd fate of those men who have in all ages, through an affectation of being distinguished from the vulgar, or some unaccountable turn of thought, pretended either to believe nothing at all, or to believe the most extravagant things in the world. This however might be borne, if their ^{3c} paradoxes and scepticism did not draw after them some consequences of general disadvantage to mankind. But the mischief lieth

here ; that when men of less leisure see them who are supposed to have spent their whole time in the pursuits of knowledge, professing an entire ignorance of all things, or advancing such notions as are repugnant to plain and commonly received principles, they will be tempted to entertain suspicions concerning the most important truths, which they had hitherto held sacred and unquestionable.

PHILONOUS. I entirely agree with you, as to the ill tendency of the affected doubts of some philosophers, and fantastical conceits of others. I am even so far gone of late in this way of thinking, that I have quitted several of the sublime notions I had got in their schools for vulgar opinions. And I give it you on my word, since this revolt from metaphysical notions to the plain dictates of Nature and common sense, I find my understanding strangely enlightened, so that I can now easily comprehend a great many things which before were all mystery and riddle.

HYLAS. I am glad to find there was nothing in the accounts I heard of you.

PHILONOUS. Pray, what were those ?

20 HYLAS. You were represented in last night's conversation, as one who maintained the most extravagant opinion that ever entered into the mind of man, to wit, that there is no such thing as material substance in the world.

PHILONOUS. That there is no such thing as what philosophers call *material substance*, I am seriously persuaded : but if I were made to see any thing absurd or sceptical in this, I should then have the same reason to renounce this, that I imagine I have now to reject the contrary opinion.

HYLAS. What ! can any thing be more fantastical, more repugnant to common sense, or a more manifest piece of scepticism, than to believe there is no such thing as *matter* ?

PHILONOUS. Softly, good Hylas. What if it should prove, that you, who hold there is, are by virtue of that opinion a greater sceptic, and maintain more paradoxes and repugnancies to common sense, than I who believe no such thing ?

HYLAS. You may as soon persuade me, the part is greater than the whole, as that, in order to avoid absurdity and scepticism, I should ever be obliged to give up my opinion in this point.

PHILONOUS. Well then, are you content to admit that opinion for 40 true, which upon examination shall appear most agreeable to common sense, and remote from scepticism ?

HYLAS. With all my heart. Since you are for raising disputes

about the plainest things in Nature, I am content for once to hear what you have to say.

PHILONOUS. Pray, Hylas, what do you mean by a *sceptic*?

HYLAS. I mean what all men mean, one that doubts of every thing.

PHILONOUS. He then who entertains no doubt concerning some particular point, with regard to that point cannot be thought a sceptic.

HYLAS. I agree with you.

PHILONOUS. Whether doth doubting consist in embracing the affirmative or negative side of a question?

HYLAS. In neither; for whoever understands English, cannot but know that *doubting* signifies a suspense between both.

PHILONOUS. He then that denieth any point, can no more be said to doubt of it, than he who affirmeth it with the same degree of assurance.

HYLAS. True.

PHILONOUS. And consequently, for such his denial is no more to be esteemed a *sceptic* than the other.

HYLAS. I acknowledge it.

PHILONOUS. How cometh it to pass then, Hylas, that you pronounce me a *sceptic*, because I deny what you affirm, to wit, the existence of matter? Since, for ought you can tell, I am as peremptory in my denial, as you in your affirmation.

HYLAS. Hold, Philonous, I have been a little out in my definition; but every false step a man makes in discourse is not to be insisted on. I said indeed, that a *sceptic* was one who doubted of every thing; but I should have added, or who denies the reality and truth of things.

PHILONOUS. What things? Do you mean the principles and theorems of sciences? But these you know are universal intellectual notions, and consequently independent of matter; the denial therefore of this doth not imply the denying them.

HYLAS. I grant it. But are there no other things? What think you of distrusting the senses, of denying the real existence of sensible things, or pretending to know nothing of them. Is not this sufficient to denominate a man a *sceptic*?

PHILONOUS. Shall we therefore examine which of us it is that denies the reality of sensible things, or professes the greatest ignorance of them; since, if I take you rightly, he is to be esteemed the greatest *sceptic*?

l 21 cometh it to pass then—(A, B) cometh it then.

HYLAS. That is what I desire.

PHILONOUS. What mean you by sensible things?

HYLAS. Those things which are perceived by the scnses. Can you imagine that I mean any thing else?

PHILONOUS. Pardon me, Hylas, if I am desirous clearly to apprehend your notions, since this may much shorten our inquiry. Suffer me then to ask you this farther question. Are those things only perceived by the senses which are perceived immediately? Or may those things properly be said to be *sensible*, 10 which are perceived mediately, or not without the intervention of others?

HYLAS. I do not sufficiently understand you.

PHILONOUS. In reading a book, what I immediately perceive are the letters, but mediately, or by means of these, are suggested to my mind the notions of God, virtue, truth, &c. Now, that the letters are truly sensible things, or perceived by sense, there is no doubt: but I would know whether you take the things suggested by them to be so too.

HYLAS. No certainly, it were absurd to think *God* or *Virtue* sensible things, though they may be signified and suggested to the mind by sensible marks, with which they have an arbitrary connexion.

PHILONOUS. It seems then, that by *sensible things* you mean those only which can be perceived immediately by sense.

HYLAS. Right.

PHILONOUS. Doth it not follow from this, that though I see one part of the sky red, and another blue, and that my reason doth thence evidently conclude therc must be some cause of that diversity of colours, yet that cause cannot be said to be a sensible 30 thing, or perceived by the sense of seeing?

HYLAS. It doth.

PHILONOUS. In like manner, though I hear variety of sounds, yet I cannot be said to hear the causes of those sounds.

HYLAS. You cannot.

PHILONOUS. And when by my touch I perceive a thing to be hot and heavy, I cannot say with any truth or propriety, that I feel the cause of its heat or weight.

HYLAS. To prevent any more questions of this kind, I tell you once for all, that by *sensible things* I mean those only which are perceived by sense, and that in truth the senses perceive nothing which they do not perceive immediately: for they make no 40 *l 15 mind*—(A, B) thoughts.

inferences. The deducing therefore of causes or occasions from effects and appearances, which alone are perceived by sense, entirely relates to reason.

PHILONOUS. This point then is agreed between us, that *sensible things are those only which are immediately perceived by sense*. You will farther inform me, whether we immediately perceive by sight any thing beside light, and colours, and figures : or by hearing, any thing but sounds : by the palate, any thing beside tastes : by the smell, beside odours : or by the touch, more than tangible qualities.

10

HYLAS. We do not.

PHILONOUS. It seems therefore, that if you take away all sensible qualities, there remains nothing sensible.

HYLAS. I grant it.

PHILONOUS. Sensible things therefore are nothing else but so many sensible qualities, or combinations of sensible qualities.

HYLAS. Nothing else.

PHILONOUS. Heat then is a sensible thing.

HYLAS. Certainly.

PHILONOUS. Doth the reality of sensible things consist in being ²⁰ perceived ? or, is it something distinct from their being perceived, and that bears no relation to the mind ?

HYLAS. To exist is one thing, and to be perceived is another.

PHILONOUS. I speak with regard to sensible things only : and of these I ask, whether by their real existence you mean a subsistence exterior to the mind, and distinct from their being perceived ?

HYLAS. I mean a real absolute being, distinct from, and without any relation to their being perceived.

PHILONOUS. Heat therefore, if it be allowed a real being, must ³⁰ exist without the mind.

HYLAS. It must.

PHILONOUS. Tell me, Hylas, is this real existence equally compatible to all degrees of heat, which we perceive : or is there any reason why we should attribute it to some, and deny it others ? And if there be, pray let me know that reason.

HYLAS. Whatever degree of heat we perceive by sense, we may be sure the same exists in the object that occasions it.

PHILONOUS. What, the greatest as well as the least ?

HYLAS. I tell you, the reason is plainly the same in respect of both : ⁴⁰ they are both perceived by sense ; nay, the greater degree of heat is more sensibly perceived ; and consequently, if there is

any difference, we are more certain of its real existence than we can be of the reality of a lesser degree.

PHILONOUS. But is not the most vehement and intense degree of heat a very great pain?

HYLAS. No one can deny it.

PHILONOUS. And is any unperceiving thing capable of pain or pleasure?

HYLAS. No certainly.

PHILONOUS. Is your material substance a senseless being, or a being endowed with sense and perception?

HYLAS. It is senseless, without doubt.

PHILONOUS. It cannot therefore be the subject of pain.

HYLAS. By no means.

PHILONOUS. Nor consequently of the greatest heat perceived by sense, since you acknowledge this to be no small pain.

HYLAS. I grant it.

PHILONOUS. What shall we say then of your external object; is it a material substance, or no?

HYLAS. It is a material substance with the sensible qualities inhering in it.

PHILONOUS. How then can a great heat exist in it, since you own it cannot in a material substance? I desire you would clear this point.

HYLAS. Hold, Philonous, I fear I was out in yielding intense heat to be a pain. It should seem rather, that pain is something distinct from heat, and the consequence or effect of it.

PHILONOUS. Upon putting your hand near the fire, do you perceive one simple uniform sensation, or two distinct sensations?

HYLAS. But one simple sensation.

PHILONOUS. Is not the heat immediately perceived?

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. And the pain?

HYLAS. True.

PHILONOUS. Seeing therefore they are both immediately perceived at the same time, and the fire affects you only with one simple, or uncompounded idea, it follows that this same simple idea is both the intense heat immediately perceived, and the pain; and consequently, that the intense heat immediately perceived, is nothing distinct from a particular sort of pain.

HYLAS. It seems so.

PHILONOUS. Again, try in your thoughts, Hylas, if you can conceive a vehement sensation to be without pain, or pleasure.

HYLAS. I cannot.

PHILONOUS. Or can you frame to yourself an idea of sensible pain or pleasure in general, abstracted from every particular idea of heat, cold, tastes, smells ? &c.

HYLAS. I do not find that I can.

PHILONOUS. Doth it not therefore follow, that sensible pain is nothing distinct from those sensations or ideas, in an intense degree ?

HYLAS. It is undeniable ; and to speak the truth, I begin to suspect a very great heat cannot exist but in a mind perceiving it. 1c

PHILONOUS. What ! are you then in that *sceptical* state of suspense, between affirming and denying ?

HYLAS. I think I may be positive in the point. A very violent and painful heat cannot exist without the mind.

PHILONOUS. It hath not therefore, according to you, any real being.

HYLAS. I own it.

PHILONOUS. Is it therefore certain, that there is no body in nature really hot ?

HYLAS. I have not denied there is any real heat in bodies. I only ~~do~~ say, there is no such thing as an intense real heat.

PHILONOUS. But did you not say before, that all degrees of heat were equally real : or if there was any difference, that the greater were more undoubtedly real than the lesser ?

HYLAS. True : but it was, because I did not then consider the ground there is for distinguishing between them, which I now plainly see. And it is this : because intense heat is nothing else but a particular kind of painful sensation ; and pain cannot exist but in a perceiving being ; it follows that no intense heat can really exist in an unperceiving corporeal substance. But ~~so~~ this is no reason why we should deny heat in an inferior degree to exist in such a substance.

PHILONOUS. But how shall we be able to discern those degrees of heat which exist only in the mind, from those which exist without it ?

HYLAS. That is no difficult matter. You know, the least pain cannot exist unperceived ; whatever therefore degree of heat is a pain, exists only in the mind. But as for all other degrees of heat, nothing obliges us to think the same of them.

PHILONOUS. I think you granted before, that no unperceiving ~~4~~ being was capable of pleasure, any more than of pain.

HYLAS. I did.

PHILONOUS. And is not warmth, or a more gentle degree of heat than what causes uneasiness, a pleasure ?

HYLAS. What then ?

PHILONOUS. Consequently it cannot exist without the mind in any unperceiving substance, or body.

HYLAS. So it seems.

PHILONOUS. Since therefore, as well those degrees of heat that are not painful, as those that are, can exist only in a thinking substance ; may we not conclude that external bodies are absolutely 10 incapable of any degree of heat whatsoever ?

HYLAS. On second thoughts, I do not think it so evident that warmth is a pleasure, as that a great degree of heat is a pain.

PHILONOUS. I do not pretend that warmth is as great a pleasure as heat is a pain. But if you grant it to be even a small pleasure, it serves to make good my conclusion.

HYLAS. I could rather call it an *indolence*. It seems to be nothing more than a privation of both pain and pleasure. And that such a quality or state as this may agree to an unthinking substance, I hope you will not deny.

PHILONOUS. If you are resolved to maintain that warmth, or a gentle degree of heat, is no pleasure, I know not how to convince you otherwise, than by appealing to your own sense. But what think you of cold ?

HYLAS. The same that I do of heat. An intense degree of cold is a pain ; for to feel a very great cold, is to perceive a great uneasiness : it cannot therefore exist without the mind ; but a lesser degree of cold may, as well as a lesser degree of heat.

PHILONOUS. Those bodies therefore, upon whose application to our 30 own, we perceive a moderate degree of heat, must be concluded to have a moderate degree of heat or warmth in them : and those, upon whose application we feel a like degree of cold, must be thought to have cold in them.

HYLAS. They must.

PHILONOUS. Can any doctrine be true that necessarily leads a man into an absurdity ?

HYLAS. Without doubt it cannot.

PHILONOUS. Is it not an absurdity to think that the same thing should be at the same time both cold and warm ?

40 HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. Suppose now one of your hands hot, and the other cold, and that they are both at once put into the same vessel of

water, in an intermediate state ; will not the water seem cold to one hand, and warm to the other ?

HYLAS. It will.

PHILONOUS. Ought we not therefore by your principles to conclude, it is really both cold and warm at the same time, that is, according to your own concession, to believe an absurdity.

HYLAS. I confess it seems so.

PHILONOUS. Consequently, the principles themselves are false, since you have granted that no true principle leads to an absurdity. 1c

HYLAS. But after all, can any thing be more absurd than to say, *there is no heat in the fire?*

PHILONOUS. To make the point still clearer ; tell me, whether in two cases exactly alike, we ought not to make the same judgment ?

HYLAS. We ought.

PHILONOUS. When a pin pricks your finger, doth it not rend and divide the fibres of your flesh ?

HYLAS. It doth.

PHILONOUS. And when a coal burns your finger, doth it any more ? 20

HYLAS. It doth not.

PHILONOUS. Since therefore you neither judge the sensation itself occasioned by the pin, nor any thing like it to be in the pin ; you should not, conformably to what you have now granted, judge the sensation occasioned by the fire, or any thing like it, to be in the fire.

HYLAS. Well, since it must be so, I am content to yield this point, and acknowledge, that heat and cold are only sensations existing in our minds : but there still remain qualities enough to secure the reality of external things. 30

PHILONOUS. But what will you say, Hylas, if it shall appear that the case is the same with regard to all other sensible qualities, and that they can no more be supposed to exist without the mind, than heat and cold ?

HYLAS. Then indeed you will have done something to the purpose ; but that is what I despair of seeing proved.

PHILONOUS. Let us examine them in order. What think you of tastes, do they exist without the mind, or no ?

HYLAS. Can any man in his senses doubt whether sugar is sweet, or wormwood bitter ? 40

PHILONOUS. Inform me, Hylas. Is a sweet taste a particular kind of pleasure or pleasant sensation, or is it not ?

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. And is not bitterness some kind of uneasiness or pain?

HYLAS. I grant it.

PHILONOUS. If therefore sugar and wormwood are unthinking corporeal substances existing without the mind, how can sweet-ness and bitterness, that is, pleasure and pain, agree to them?

HYLAS. Hold, Philonous, I now see what it was deluded me all this time. You ask'd whether heat and cold, sweetness and bitterness, were not particular sorts of pleasure and pain;

10 to which I answered simply, that they were. Whereas I should have thus distinguished: those qualities, as perceived by us, are pleasures or pains, but not as existing in the external objects. We must not therefore conclude absolutely, that there is no heat in the fire, or sweet-ness in the sugar, but only that heat or sweet-ness, as perceived by us, are not in the fire or sugar. What say you to this?

PHILONOUS. I say it is nothing to the purpose. Our discourse proceeded altogether concerning sensible things, which you defined to be the things we *immediately perceive by our senses*.

20 Whatever other qualities therefore you speak of, as distinct from these, I know nothing of them, neither do they at all belong to the point in dispute. You may indeed pretend to have discovered certain qualities which you do not perceive, and assert those insensible qualitics exist in fire and sugar. But what use can be made of this to your present purpose, I am at a loss to conceive. Tell me then once more, do you acknowledge that heat and cold, sweetness and bitterness (meaning those qualities which are perceived by the senses) do not exist without the mind?

30 HYLAS. I see it is to no purpose to hold out, so I give up the cause as to those mentioned qualities. Though I profess it sounds oddly, to say that sugar is not sweet.

PHILONOUS. But for your farther satisfaction, take this along with you: that which at other times seems sweet, shall to a dis-tempered palate appear bitter. And nothing can be plainer, than that divers persons perceive different tastes in the same food, since that which one man delights in, another abhors. And how could this be, if the taste was something really inherent in the food?

40 HYLAS. I acknowledge I know not how.

PHILONOUS. In the next place, odours are to be considered. And with regard to these, I would fain know, whether what hath

been said of tastes doth not exactly agree to them ? Are they not so many pleasing or displeasing sensations ?

HYLAS. They are.

PHILONOUS. Can you then conceive it possible that they should exist in an unperceiving thing ?

HYLAS. I cannot.

PHILONOUS. Or can you imagine, that filth and ordure affect those brute animals that feed on them out of choice, with the same smells which we perceive in them ?

HYLAS. By no means.

PHILONOUS. May we not therefore conclude of smells, as of the other forementioned qualities, that they cannot exist in any but a perceiving substance or mind ?

HYLAS. I think so.

PHILONOUS. Then as to sounds, what must we think of them : are they accidents really inherent in external bodies, or not ?

HYLAS. That they inhere not in the sonorous bodies, is plain from hence ; because a bell struck in the exhausted receiver of an air-pump, sends forth no sound. The air therefore must be thought the subject of sound.

PHILONOUS. What reason is there for that, Hylas ?

HYLAS. Because when any motion is raised in the air, we perceive a sound greater or lesser, in proportion to the air's motion ; but without some motion in the air, we never hear any sound at all.

PHILONOUS. And granting that we never hear a sound but when some motion is produced in the air, yet I do not see how you can infer from thence, that the sound itself is in the air.

HYLAS. It is this very motion in the external air, that produces in the mind the sensation of *sound*. For, striking on the drum of the ear, it causeth a vibration, which by the auditory nerves being communicated to the brain, the soul is thereupon affected with the sensation called *sound*.

PHILONOUS. What ! is sound then a sensation ?

HYLAS. I tell you, as perceived by us, it is a particular sensation in the mind.

PHILONOUS. And can any sensation exist without the mind ?

HYLAS. No certainly.

PHILONOUS. How then can sound, being a sensation exist in the air, if by the *air* you mean a senseless substance existing without the mind ?

HYLAS. You must distinguish, Philonous, between sound as it is

perceived by us, and as it is in itself ; or (which is the same thing) between the sound we immediately perceive, and that which exists without us. The former indeed is a particular kind of sensation, but the latter is merely a vibrative or undulatory motion in the air.

PHILONOUS. I thought I had already obviated that distinction by the answer I gave when you were applying it in a like case before. But to say no more of that ; are you sure then that sound is really nothing but motion ?

10 HYLAS. I am.

PHILONOUS. Whatever therefore agrees to real sound, may with truth be attributed to motion.

HYLAS. It may.

PHILONOUS. It is then good sense to speak of *motion*, as of a thing that is *loud, sweet, acute, or grave*.

HYLAS. I see you are resolved not to understand me. Is it not evident, those accidents or modes belong only to sensible sound, or *sound* in the common acceptation of the word, but not to *sound* in the real and philosophic sense, which, as I just now 20 told you, is nothing but a certain motion of the air ?

PHILONOUS. It seems then there are two sorts of sound, the one vulgar, or that which is heard, the other philosophical and real.

HYLAS. Even so.

PHILONOUS. And the latter consists in motion.

HYLAS. I told you so before.

PHILONOUS. Tell me, Hylas, to which of the senses think you, the idea of motion belongs : to the hearing ?

HYLAS. No certainly, but to the sight and touch.

30 PHILONOUS. It should follow then, that according to you, real sounds may possibly be *seen* or *felt*, but never *heard*.

HYLAS. Look you, Philonous, you may if you please make a jest of my opinion, but that will not alter the truth of things. I own indeed, the inferences you draw me into, sound something oddly ; but common language, you know, is framed by, and for the use of the vulgar : we must not therefore wonder, if expressions adapted to exact philosophic notions, seem uncouth and out of the way.

PHILONOUS. Is it come to that ? I assure you, I imagine myself 40 to have gained no small point, since you make so light of departing from common phrases and opinions ; it being a main part of our inquiry, to examine whose notions are widest of the

common road, and most repugnant to the general sense of the world. But can you think it no more than a philosophical paradox, to say that *real sounds are never heard*, and that the idea of them is obtained by some other sense. And is there nothing in this contrary to nature and the truth of things?

HYLAS. To deal ingenuously, I do not like it. And after the concessions already made, I had as well grant that sounds too have no real being without the mind.

PHILONOUS. And I hope you will make no difficulty to acknowledge the same of colours.

HYLAS. Pardon me: the case of colours is very different. Can any thing be plainer, than that we see them on the objects?

PHILONOUS. The objects you speak of are, I suppose, corporeal substances existing without the mind.

HYLAS. They are.

PHILONOUS. And have true and real colours inhering in them?

HYLAS. Each visible object hath that colour which we see in it.

PHILONOUS. How! Is there any thing visible but what we perceive by sight?

HYLAS. There is not.

PHILONOUS. And do we perceive any thing by sense, which we do not perceive immediately?

HYLAS. How often must I be obliged to repeat the same thing? I tell you, we do not.

PHILONOUS. Have patience, good Hylas; and tell me once more, whether there is any thing immediately perceived by the senses, except sensible qualities. I know you ascerted there was not: but I would now be informed, whether you still persist in the same opinion.

HYLAS. I do.

PHILONOUS. Pray, is your corporeal substance either a sensible quality, or made up of sensible qualities?

HYLAS. What a question that is! who ever thought it was?

PHILONOUS. My reason for asking was, because in saying, *each visible object hath that colour which we see in it*, you make visible objects to be corporeal substances; which implies either that corporeal substances are sensible qualities, or else that there is something beside sensible qualities perceived by sight: but as this point was formerly agreed between us, and is still maintained by you, it is a clear consequence, that your corporeal substance is nothing distinct from sensible qualities.

¹ *as well grant*—(*A, B*) *as good grant*.

HYLAS. You may draw as many absurd consequences as you please, and endeavour to perplex the plainest things ; but you shall never persuade me out of my senses. I clearly understand my own meaning.

PHILONOUS. I wish you would make me understand it too. But since you are unwilling to have your notion of corporal substance examined, I shall urge that point no farther. Only be pleased to let me know, whether the same colours which we see, exist in external bodies, or some other.

10 HYLAS. The very same.

PHILONOUS. What ! are then the beautiful red and purple we see on yonder clouds, really in them ? Or do you imagine they have in themselves any other form, than that of a dark mist or vapour ?

HYLAS. I must own, Philonous, those colours are not really in the clouds as they seem to be at this distance. They are only apparent colours.

PHILONOUS. *Apparent* call you them ? how shall we distinguish these apparent colours from real ?

HYLAS. Very easily. Those are to be thought apparent, which 20 appearing only at a distance, vanish upon a nearer approach.

PHILONOUS. And those I suppose are to be thought real, which are discovered by the most near and exact survey.

HYLAS. Right.

PHILONOUS. Is the nearest and exactest survey made by the help of a microscope, or by the naked eye ?

HYLAS. By a microscope, doubtless.

PHILONOUS. But a microscope often discovers colours in an object different from those perceived by the unassisted sight. And in case we had microscopes magnifying to any assigned degree ; 30 it is certain, that no object whatsover viewed through them, would appear in the same colour which it exhibits to the naked eye.

HYLAS. And what will you conclude from all this ? You cannot argue that there are really and naturally no colours on objects : because by artificial managements they may be altered, or made to vanish.

PHILONOUS. I think it may evidently be concluded from your own concessions, that all the colours we see with our naked eyes, are only apparent as those on the clouds, since they vanish upon 40 a more close and accurate inspection, which is afforded us by a microscope. Then as to what you say by way of prevention :

l 24 by the help—(A, B) by help.

I ask you, whether the real and natural state of an object is better discovered by a very sharp and piercing sight, or by one which is less sharp ?

HYLAS. By the former without doubt.

PHILONOUS. Is it not plain from *dioptrics*, that microscopes make the sight more penetrating, and represent objects as they would appear to the eye, in case it were naturally endowed with a most exquisite sharpness ?

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. Consequently the microscopical representation is to 10 be thought that which best sets forth the real nature of the thing, or what it is in itself. The colours therefore by it perceived, are more genuine and real, than those perceived otherwise.

HYLAS. I confess there is something in what you say.

PHILONOUS. Besides, it is not only possible but manifest, that there actually are animals, whose eyes are by Nature framed to perceive those things, which by reason of their minuteness escape our sight. What think you of those inconceivably small animals perceived by glasses ? Must we suppose they are all stark blind ? Or, in case they see, can it be imagined their sight hath 20 not the same use in preserving their bodies from injuries, which appears in that of all other animals ? And if it hath, is it not evident, they must see particles less than their own bodies, which will present them with a far different view in each object, from that which strikes our senses ? Even our own eyes do not always represent objects to us after the same manner. In the jaundice, every one knows that all things seem yellow. Is it not therefore highly probable, those animals in whose eyes we discern a very different texture from that of ours, and whose bodies abound with different humours, do not see the same 30 colours in every object that we do ? From all which, should it not seem to follow, that all colours are equally apparent, and that none of those which we perceive are really inherent in any outward object ?

HYLAS. It should.

PHILONOUS. The point will be past all doubt, if you consider, that in case colours were real properties or affections inherent in external bodies, they could admit of no alteration, without some change wrought in the very bodies themselves : but is it not evident from what hath been said, that upon the use of micro- 40 scopes, upon a change happening in the humours of the eye, or a variation of distance, without any manner of real alteration

in the thing itself, the colours of any object are either changed, or totally disappear? Nay all other circumstances remaining the same, change but the situation of some objects, and they shall present different colours to the eye. The same thing happens upon viewing an object in various degrees of light. And what is more known, than that the same bodies appear differently coloured by candle-light, from what they do in the open day? Add to these the experiment of a prism, which separating the heterogeneous rays of light, alters the colour of any object; and will cause the whitest to appear of a deep blue or red to the naked eye. And now tell me, whether you are still of opinion, that every body hath its true real colour inhering in it; and if you think it hath, I would fain know farther from you, what certain distance and position of the object, what peculiar texture and formation of the eye, what degree or kind of light is necessary for ascertaining that true colour, and distinguishing it from apparent ones.

HYLAS. I own myself entirely satisfied, that they are all equally apparent; and that there is no such thing as colour really inhering in external bodies, but that it is altogether in the light. And what confirms me in this opinion is, that in proportion to the light, colours are still more or less vivid; and if there be no light, then are there no colours perceived. Besides, allowing there are colours on external objects, yet how is it possible for us to perceive them? For no external body affects the mind, unless it act first on our organs of sense. But the only action of bodies is motion; and motion cannot be communicated otherwise than by impulse. A distant object therefore cannot act on the eye, nor consequently make itself or its properties perceptible to the soul. Whence it plainly follows, that it is immediately some contiguous substance, which operating on the eye occasions a perception of colours: and such is light.

PHILONOUS. How! is light then a substance?

HYLAS. I tell you, Philonous, external light is nothing but a thin fluid substance, whose minute particles being agitated with a brisk motion, and in various manners reflected from the different surfaces of outward objects to the eyes, communicate different motions to the optic nerves; which being propagated to the brain, cause therein various impressions: and these are attended with the sensations of red, blue, yellow, &c.

PHILONOUS. It seems then, the light doth no more than shake the optic nerves.

HYLAS. Nothing else.

PHILONOUS. And consequent to each particular motion of the nerves the mind is affected with a sensation, which is some particular colour.

HYLAS. Right.

PHILONOUS. And these sensations have no existence without the mind.

HYLAS. They have not.

PHILONOUS. How then do you affirm that colours are in the light, since by *light* you understand a corporeal substance external to the mind?

HYLAS. Light and colours, as immediately perceived by us, I grant cannot exist without the mind. But in themselves they are only the motions and configurations of certain insensible particles of matter.

PHILONOUS. Colours then in the vulgar sense, or taken for the immediate objects of sight, cannot agree to any but a perceiving substance.

HYLAS. That is what I say.

PHILONOUS. Well then, since you give up the point as to those sensible qualities, which are alone thought colours by all mankind beside, you may hold what you please with regard to those invisible ones of the philosophers. It is not my business to dispute about them; only I would advise you to bethink your self, whether considering the inquiry we are upon, it be prudent for you to affirm, *the red and blue which we see are not real colours, but certain unknown motions and figures which no man ever did or can see, are truly so*. Are not these shocking notions, and are not they subject to as many ridiculous inferences, as those you were obliged to renounce before in the case of sounds?

30

HYLAS. I frankly own, Philonous, that it is in vain to stand out any longer. Colours, sounds, tastes, in a word, all those termed *secondary qualities*, have certainly no existence without the mind. But by this acknowledgment I must not be supposed to derogate any thing from the reality of matter or external objects, seeing it is no more than several philosophers maintain, who nevertheless are the farthest imaginable from denying matter. For the clearer understanding of this, you must know sensible qualities are by philosophers divided into *primary* and *secondary*. The former are extension, figure, solidity, gravity, motion, and rest.

40

l 13 are only—(A, B) consist entirely in. l 24 bethink your self—(A, B) think.
l 29 were obliged to renounce before—(A, B) before renounced.

And these they hold exist really in bodies. The latter are those above enumerated ; or briefly, all sensible qualities beside the primary, which they assert are only so many sensations or ideas existing no where but in the mind. But all this, I doubt not, you are already apprised of. For my part, I have been a long time sensible there was such an opinion current among philosophers, but was never thoroughly convinced of its truth till now.

PHILONOUS. You are still then of opinion, that extension and 10 figures are inherent in external unthinking substances.

HYLAS. I am.

PHILONOUS. But what if the same arguments which are brought against secondary qualitics, will hold good against these also ?

HYLAS. Why then I shall be obliged to think, they too exist only in the mind.

PHILONOUS. Is it your opinion, the very figure and extension which you perceive by sense, exist in the outward object or material substance ?

HYLAS. It is.

20 PHILONOUS. Have all other animals as good grounds to think the same of the figure and extention which they see and feel ?

HYLAS. Without doubt, if they have any thought at all.

PHILONOUS. Answer me, Hylas. Think you the senses were bestowed upon all animals for their preservation and well-being in life ? or were they given to men alone for this end ?

HYLAS. I make no question but they have the same use in all other animals.

PHILONOUS. If so, is it not necessary they should be enabled by them to perceive their own limbs, and those bodies which are 30 capable of harming them ?

HYLAS. Certainly.

PHILONOUS. A mite therefore must be supposed to see his own foot, and things equal or even less than it, as bodies of some considerable dimension ; though at the same time they appear to you scarce discernible, or at best as so many visible points.

HYLAS. I cannot deny it.

PHILONOUS. And to creatures less than the mite they will seem yet larger.

HYLAS. They will.

40 PHILONOUS. Insomuch that what you can hardly discern, will to another extremely minute animal appear as some huge mountain.

HYLAS. All this I grant.

PHILONOUS. Can one and the same thing be at the same time in itself of different dimensions?

HYLAS. That were absurd to imagine.

PHILONOUS. But from what you have laid down it follows, that both the extension by you perceived, and that perceived by the mite itself, as likewise all those perceived by lesser animals, are each of them the true extension of the mite's foot, that is to say, by your own principles you are led into an absurdity.

HYLAS. There seems to be some difficulty in the point.

PHILONOUS. Again, have you not acknowledged that no real inherent property of any object can be changed, without some change in the thing itself?

HYLAS. I have.

PHILONOUS. But as we approach to or recede from an object, the visible extension varies, being at one distance ten or an hundred times greater than at another. Doth it not therefore follow from hence likewise, that it is not really inherent in the object?

HYLAS. I own I am at a loss what to think.

PHILONOUS. Your judgment will soon be determin'd, if you will venture to think as freely concerning this quality, as you have done concerning the rest. Was it not admitted as a good argument, that neither heat nor cold was in the water, because it seemed warm to one hand, and cold to the other?

HYLAS. It was.

PHILONOUS. Is it not the very same reasoning to conclude, there is no extension or figure in an object, because to one eye it shall seem little, smooth, and round, when at the same time it appears to the other, great, uneven, and angular?

HYLAS. The very same. But doth this latter fact ever happen?

PHILONOUS. You may at any time make the experiment, by looking with one eye bare, and with the other through a microscope.

HYLAS. I know not how to maintain it, and yet I am loth to give up *extension*, I see so many odd consequences following upon such a concession.

PHILONOUS. Odd, say you? After the concessions already made, I hope you will stick at nothing for its oddness. But on the other hand should it not seem very odd, if the general reasoning which

I 23 concerning—(A, B) in respect of. I 39 But on the other hand . . . perceive it (C only).

includes all other sensible qualities did not also include extension ? If it be allowed that no idea nor any thing like an idea can exist in an unperceiving substance, then surely it follows, that no figure or mode of extension, which we can either perceive or imagine, or have any idea of, can be really inherent in matter ; not to mention the peculiar difficulty there must be, in conceiving a material substance, prior to and distinct from extension, to be the *substratum* of extension. Be the sensible quality what it will, figure, or sound, or colour ; it ¹⁰ seems alike impossible it should subsist in that which doth not perceive it.

HYLAS. I give up the point for the present, reserving still a right to retract my opinion, in case I shall hereafter discover any false step in my progress to it.

PHILONOUS. That is a right you cannot be denied. Figures and extension being dispatched, we proceed next to *motion*. Can a real motion in any external body be at the same time both very swift and very slow ?

HYLAS. It cannot.

20 PHILONOUS. Is not the motion of a body swift in a reciprocal proportion to the time it takes up in describing any given space ? Thus a body that describes a mile in an hour, moves three times faster than it would in case it described only a mile in three hours.

HYLAS. I agree with you.

PHILONOUS. And is not time measured by the succession of ideas in our minds ?

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. And is it not possible ideas should succeed one another ³⁰ twice as fast in your mind, as they do in mine, or in that of some spirit of another kind.

HYLAS. I own it.

PHILONOUS. Consequently the same body may to another seem to perform its motion over any space in half the time that it doth to you. And the same reasoning will hold as to any other proportion : that is to say, according to your principles (since the motions perceived are both really in the object) it is possible one and the same body shall be really moved the same way at once, both very swift and very slow. How is this consistent ⁴⁰ either with common sense, or with what you just now granted ?

HYLAS. I have nothing to say to it.

PHILONOUS. Then as for *solidity* ; either you do not mean any sensible quality by that word, and so it is beside our inquiry : or if you do, it must be either hardness or resistance. But both the one and the other are plainly relative to our senses : it being evident, that what seems hard to one animal, may appear soft to another, who hath greater force and firmness of limbs. Nor is it less plain, that the resistance I feel is not in the body.

HYLAS. I own the very sensation of resistance, which is all you immediately perceive, is not in the *body*, but the cause of that ¹⁰ sensation is.

PHILONOUS. But the causes of our sensations are not things immediately perceived, and therefore not sensible. This point I thought had been already determined.

HYLAS. I own it was ; but you will pardon me if I seem a little embarrassed : I know not how to quit my old notions.

PHILONOUS. To help you out, do but consider, that if extension be once acknowledged to have no existence without the mind, the same must necessarily be granted of motion, solidity, and gravity, since they all evidently suppose extension. It is therefore superfluous to inquire particularly concerning each of them. In denying extension, you have denied them all to have any real existence.

HYLAS. I wonder, Philonous, if what you say be true, why those philosophers who deny the secondary qualities any real existence, should yet attribute it to the primary. If there is no difference between them, how can this be accounted for ?

PHILONOUS. It is not my business to account for every opinion of the philosophers. But among other reasons which may be assigned for this, it seems probable, that pleasure and pain ³⁰ being rather annexed to the former than the latter, may be one. Heat and cold, tastes and smells, have something more vividly pleasing or disagreeable than the ideas of extension, figure, and motion, affect us with. And it being too visibly absurd to hold, that pain or pleasure can be in an unperceiving substance, men are more easily weaned from believing the external existence of the secondary, than the primary qualities. You will be satisfied there is something in this, if you recollect the difference you made between an intense and more moderate degree of heat, allowing the one a real existence, while you ⁴⁰ denied it to the other. But after all, there is no rational ground for that distinction ; for surely an indifferent sensation is as

truly *a sensation*, as one more pleasing or painful¹ ; and consequently should not any more than they be supposed to exist in an unthinking subject.

HYLAS. It is just come into my head, Philonous, that I have somewhere heard of a distinction between absolute and sensible extension.² Now though it be acknowledged that *great* and *small*, consisting merely in the relation which other extended beings have to the parts of our own bodies, do not really inhere in the substances themselves ; yet nothing obliges us to hold

10 the same with regard to *absolute extension*, which is something abstracted from *great* and *small*, from this or that particular magnitude or figure. So likewise as to motion, *swift* and *slow* are altogether relative to the succession of ideas in our own minds. But it doth not follow, because those modifications of motion exist not without the mind, that therefore absolute motion abstracted from them doth not.

PHILONOUS. Pray what is it that distinguishes one motion, or one part of extension from another ? Is it not something sensible, as some degree of swiftness or slowness, some certain magnitude

20 or figure peculiar to each ?

HYLAS. I think so.

PHILONOUS. These qualities therefore stripped of all sensible properties, are without all specific and numerical differences, as the Schools call them.

HYLAS. They are.

PHILONOUS. That is to say, they are extension in general, and motion in general.

HYLAS. Let it be so.

PHILONOUS. But it is an universally received maxim, that *every* 30 *thing which exists, is particular*.³ How then can motion in general, or extension in general exist in any corporeal substance ?

l 17 or one part—(A, B) or part.

¹ [This is Berkeley's real contention : the being of *all* sensed objects consists in their being perceived. The preceding observations on the complication of heat, cold, tastes and smells with pleasure and pain (perhaps suggested by Malebranche, *Recherche*, I xii ; or by Locke, *Essay*, II viii 16) are intended as an *argumentum ad hominem* ; and so also is the argument from the relativity of sense-qualities to our bodily position and condition, as is made clear in *Principles*, Scct. 15.—Ed.] ² [See *Principles*, Sects. 110 and 116.—Ed.]

³ [Locke begins his discussion of general terms with the statement, 'All things that exist being particulars' (*Essay*, III iii 1). The doctrine is Aristotelian, triumphant over the Platonic since the later Middle Ages. On Berkeley's doctrine that all 'ideas' also are particulars, see his *Introduction to the Principles*.—Ed.]

HYLAS. I will take time to solve your difficulty.

PHILONOUS. But I think the point may be spedily decided. Without doubt you can tell, whether you are able to frame this or that idea. Now I am content to put our dispute on this issue. If you can frame in your thoughts a distinct abstract idea of motion or extension, divested of all those sensible modes, as swift and slow, great and small, round and square, and the like, which are acknowledged to exist only in the mind, I will then yield the point you contend for. But if you cannot, it will be unreasonable on your side to insist any longer upon what you ¹⁰ have no notion of.

HYLAS. To confess ingenuously, I cannot.

PHILONOUS. Can you even separate the ideas of extension and motion, from the ideas of all those qualities which they who make the distinction, term *secondary*.

HYLAS. What ! is it not an easy matter, to consider extension and motion by themselves, abstracted from all other sensible qualities ? Pray how do the mathematicians treat of them ?

PHILONOUS. I acknowledge, Hylas, it is not difficult to form general propositions and reasonings about those qualities, without mentioning any other ; and in this sense to consider or treat of them abstractedly. But how doth it follow that because I can pronounce the word *motion* by itself, I can form the idea of it in my mind exclusive of body ? Or because theorems may be made of extension and figures, without any mention of *great* or *small*, or any other sensible mode or quality ; that therefore it is possible such an abstract idea of extension, without any particular size or figure, or sensible quality, should be distinctly formed, and apprehended by the mind ? Mathematicians treat of quantity, without regarding what other sensible qualities it ²⁰ is attended with, as being altogether indifferent to their demonstrations.¹ But when laying aside the words, they contemplate the bare ideas, I believe you will find, they are not the pure abstracted ideas of extension.

HYLAS. But what say you to *pure intellect* ? May not abstracted ideas be framed by that faculty ?

PHILONOUS. Since I cannot frame abstract ideas at all, it is plain, I cannot frame them by the help of *pure intellect*, whatsoever ^{l 14} of all those—(A, B) of light and colours, hard and soft, hot and cold, with the rest of those. ^{l 28} size or figure, or sensible quality—(A, B) size, colour, &c.

¹ [See Berkeley's Introduction to the *Principles*, Sect. 16, the concluding three sentences added in the 1734 edition.—Ed.]

faculty you understand by those words. Besides, not to inquire into the nature of pure intellect and its spiritual objects, as *virtue, reason, God*, or the like ; thus much seems manifest, that sensible things are only to be perceived by sense, or represented by the imagination. Figures therefore and extension being originally perceived by sense, do not belong to pure intellect. But for your farther satisfaction, try if you can frame the idea of any figure, abstracted from all particularities of size, or even from other sensible qualities.

10 HYLAS. Let me think a little—I do not find that I can.

PHILONOUS. And can you think it possible, that should really exist in Nature, which implies a repugnancy in its conception ?

HYLAS. By no means.

PHILONOUS. Since therefore it is impossible even for the mind to disunite the ideas of extension and motion from all other sensible qualities, doth it not follow, that where the one exist, there necessarily the other exist likewise ?

HYLAS. It should seem so.

20 PHILONOUS. Consequently the very same arguments which you admitted, as conclusive against the secondary qualities, are without any farther application of force against the primary too. Besides, if you will trust your senses, is it not plain all sensible qualities coexist, or to them, appear as being in the same place ? Do they ever represent a motion, or figure, as being divested of all other visible and tangible qualities ?

HYLAS. You need say no more on this head. I am free to own, if there be no secret error or oversight in our proceedings hitherto, that all sensible qualities are alike to be denied existence without the mind. But my fear is, that I have been too liberal 30 in my former concessions, or overlooked some fallacy or other. In short, I did not take time to think.

PHILONOUS. For that matter, Hylas, you may take what time you please in reviewing the progress of our inquiry. You are at liberty to recover any slips you might have made, or offer whatever you have omitted, which makes for your first opinion.

HYLAS. One great oversight I take to be this : that I did not sufficiently distinguish the *object* from the *sensation*. Now though this latter may not exist without the mind, yet it will not thence follow that the former cannot.

40 PHILONOUS. What object do you mean ? the object of the senses ?

HYLAS. The same.

PHILONOUS. It is then immediately perceived.

HYLAS. Right.

PHILONOUS. Make me to understand the difference between what is immediately perceived, and a sensation.

HYLAS. The sensation I take to be an act of the mind perceiving ; beside which, there is something perceived ; and this I call the *object*. For example, there is red and yellow on that tulip. But then the act of perceiving those colours is in me only, and not in the tulip.

PHILONOUS. What tulip do you speak of ? is it that which you see ?
HYLAS. The same.

PHILONOUS. And what do you see beside colour, figure, and extension ?

HYLAS. Nothing.

PHILONOUS. What you would say then is, that the red and yellow are coexistent with the extension ; is it not ?

HYLAS. That is not all ; I would say, they have a real existence without the mind, in some unthinking substance.

PHILONOUS. That the colours are really in the tulip which I see, is manifest. Neither can it be denied, that this tulip may exist independent of your mind or mine¹ ; but that any immediate object of the senses, that is, any idea, or combination of ideas, should exist in an unthinking substance, or exterior to all minds, is in itself an evident contradiction. Nor can I imagine how this follows from what you said just now, to wit that the red and yellow were on the tulip *you saw*, since you do not pretend to *see* that unthinking substance.

HYLAS. You have an artful way, Philonous, of diverting our inquiry from the subject.

PHILONOUS. I see you have no mind to be pressed that way. To return then to your distinction between *sensation* and *object* ; if I take you right, you distinguish in every perception two things, the one an action of the mind, the other not.

HYLAS. True.

PHILONOUS. And this action cannot exist in, or belong to any unthinking thing ; but whatever beside is implied in a perception, may.

¹ [A perceived thing's independence of the finite mind is for Berkeley an unquestionable datum of experience, or questionable only at the cost of radical scepticism. 'The question between the materialists and me is not, whether things have a real existence out of the mind of this or that person, but whether they have an absolute existence, distinct from being perceived by God, and exterior to all minds' (below, p. 235).—Ed.]

HYLAS. That is my meaning.

PHILONOUS. So that if there was a perception without any act of the mind, it were possible such a perception should exist in an unthinking substance.

HYLAS. I grant it. But it is impossible there should be such a perception.

PHILONOUS. When is the mind said to be active?

HYLAS. When it produces, puts an end to, or changes any thing.

PHILONOUS. Can the mind produce, discontinue, or change any 10 thing but by an act of the will?

HYLAS. It cannot.

PHILONOUS. The mind therefore is to be accounted active in its perceptions, so far forth as volition is included in them.

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. In plucking this flower, I am active, because I do it by the motion of my hand, which was consequent upon my volition; so likewise in applying it to my nose. But is either of these smelling?

HYLAS. No.

20 PHILONOUS. I act too in drawing the air through my nose; because my breathing so rather than otherwise, is the effect of my volition. But neither can this be called *smelling*: for if it were, I should smell every time I breathed in that manner.

HYLAS. True.

PHILONOUS. Smelling then is somewhat consequent to all this.

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. But I do not find my will concerned any farther. Whatever more there is, as that I perceive such a particular smell or any smell at all, this is independent of my will, and 30 therein I am altogether passive. Do you find it otherwise with you, Hylas?

HYLAS. No, the very same.

PHILONOUS. Then as to seeing, is it not in your power to open your eyes, or keep them shut; to turn them this or that way?

HYLAS. Without doubt.

PHILONOUS. But doth it in like manner depend on your will, that in looking on this flower, you perceive *white* rather than any other colour? Or directing your open eyes toward yonder part of the heaven, can you avoid seeing the sun? Or is light 40 or darkness the effect of your volition?

HYLAS. No certainly.

PHILONOUS. You are then in these respects altogether passive.

HYLAS. I am.

PHILONOUS. Tell me now, whether *seeing* consists in perceiving light and colours, or in opening and turning the eyes ?

HYLAS. Without doubt, in the former.

PHILONOUS. Since therefore you are in the very perception of light and colours altogether passive, what is become of that action you were speaking of, as an ingredient in every sensation ? And doth it not follow from your own concessions, that the perception of light and colours, including no action in it, may exist in an unperceiving substance ? And is not this a plain contradiction ? ^{1c}

HYLAS. I know not what to think of it.

PHILONOUS. Besides, since you distinguish the *active* and *passive* in every perception, you must do it in that of pain. But how is it possible that pain, be it as little active as you please, should exist in an unperceiving substance ? In short, do but consider the point, and then confess ingenuously, whether light and colours, tastes, sounds, &c. are not all equally passions or sensations in the soul. You may indeed call them *external objects*, and give them in words what subsistence you please. But examine your own thoughts, and then tell me whether it be not ²⁰ as I say ?

HYLAS. I acknowledge, Philonous, that upon a fair observation of what passes in my mind, I can discover nothing else, but that I am a thinking being, affected with variety of sensations ; neither is it possible to conceive how a sensation should exist in an unperceiving substance. But then on the other hand, when I look on sensible things in a different view, considering them as so many modes and qualitics, I find it necessary to suppose a material *substratum*, without which they cannot be conceived to exist. ³⁰

PHILONOUS. *Material substratum* call you it ? Pray, by which of your senses came you acquainted with that being ?

HYLAS. It is not itself sensible ; its modes and qualitics only being perceived by the senses.

PHILONOUS. I presume then, it was by reflexion and reason you obtained the idea of it.

HYLAS. I do not pretend to any proper positive idea of it. However I conclude it exists, because qualities cannot be conceived to exist without a support.

PHILONOUS. It seems then you have only a relative notion of it, ^{4c} or that you conceive it not otherwise than by conceiving the relation it bears to sensible qualities.

HYLAS. Right.

PHILONOUS. Be pleased therefore to let me know wherein that relation consists.

HYLAS. Is it not sufficiently expressed in the term *substratum*, or *substance*?

PHILONOUS. If so, the word *substratum* should import, that it is spread under the sensible qualities or accidents.

HYLAS. True.

PHILONOUS. And consequently under extension.

10 HYLAS. I own it.

PHILONOUS. It is therefore somewhat in its own nature entirely distinct from extension.

HYLAS; I tell you, extension is only a mode, and matter is something that supports modes. And is it not evident the thing supported is different from the thing supporting?

PHILONOUS. So that something distinct from, and exclusive of extension, is supposed to be the *substratum* of extension.

HYLAS. Just so.

PHILONOUS. Answer me, Hylas. Can a thing be spread without extension? or is not the idea of extension necessarily included in spreading?

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. Whatsoever therefore you suppose spread under any thing, must have in itself an extension distinct from the extension of that thing under which it is spread.

HYLAS. It must.

PHILONOUS. Consequently every corporeal substance being the *substratum* of extension, must have in itself another extension by which it is qualified to be a *substratum*: and so on to infinity.

30 And I ask whether this be not absurd in itself, and repugnant to what you granted just now, to wit, that the *substratum* was something distinct from, and exclusive of extension.

HYLAS. Ay but, Philonous, you take me wrong. I do not mean that matter is *spread* in a gross literal sense under extension. The word *substratum* is used only to express in general the same thing with *substance*.

PHILONOUS. Well then, let us examine the relation implied in the term *substance*. Is it not that it stands under accidents?

HYLAS. The very same.

40 PHILONOUS. But that one thing may stand under or support another, must it not be extended?

HYLAS. It must.

PHILONOUS. Is not therefore this supposition liable to the same absurdity with the former ?

HYLAS. You still take things in a strict literal sense : that is not fair, Philonous.

PHILONOUS. I am not for imposing any sense on your words : you are at liberty to explain them as you please. Only I beseech you, make me understand something by them. You tell me, matter supports or stands under accidents. How ! is it as your legs support your body ?

HYLAS. No ; that is the literal sense.

PHILONOUS. Pray let me know any sense, literal or not literal, that you understand it in. — How long must I wait for an answer, Hylas ?

HYLAS. I declare I know not what to say. I once thought I understood well enough what was meant by matter's supporting accidents. But now the more I think on it, the less can I comprehend it ; in short, I find that I know nothing of it.

PHILONOUS. It seems then you have no idea at all, neither relative nor positive of matter ; you know neither what it is in itself, nor what relation it bears to accidents.

20

HYLAS. I acknowledge it.

PHILONOUS. And yet you asserted, that you could not conceive how qualities or accidents should really exist, without conceiving at the same time a material support of them.

HYLAS. I did.

PHILONOUS. That is to say, when you conceive the real existence of qualities, you do withal conceive something which you cannot conceive.

HYLAS. It was wrong I own. But still I fear there is some fallacy or other. Pray what think you of this ? It is just come into my head, that the ground of all our mistakes lies in your treating of each quality by itself. Now, I grant that each quality cannot singly subsist without the mind. Colour cannot without extension, neither can figure without some other sensible quality. But as the several qualities united or blended together form entire sensible things, nothing hinders why such things may not be supposed to exist without the mind.

PHILONOUS. Either, Hylas, you are jesting, or have a very bad memory. Though indeed we went through all the qualities by name one after another ; yet my arguments, or rather your 40 concessions no where tended to prove, that the secondary qualities did not subsist each alone by itself ; but that they were not

at all without the mind. Indeed in treating of figure and motion, we concluded they could not exist without the mind, because it was impossible even in thought to separate them from all secondary qualities, so as to conceive them existing by themselves. But then this was not the only argument made use of upon that occasion. But (to pass by all that hath been hitherto said, and reckon it for nothing, if you will have it so) I am content to put the whole upon this issue. If you can conceive it possible for any mixture or combination of qualities, or any sensible object whatever, to exist without the mind, then I will grant it actually to be so.

HYLAS. If it comes to that, the point will soon be decided. What more easy than to conceive a tree or house existing by itself, independent of, and unperceived by any mind whatsoever? I do at this present time conceive them existing after that manner.

PHILONOUS. How say you, Hylas, can you see a thing which is at the same time unseen?

HYLAS. No, that were a contradiction.

PHILONOUS. Is it not as great a contradiction to talk of *conceiving* a thing which is *unconceived*?

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. The tree or house therefore which you think of, is conceived by you.

HYLAS. How should it be otherwisc?

PHILONOUS. And what is concievcd, is surely in the mind.

HYLAS. Without question, that which is conceived is in the mind.

PHILONOUS. How then came you to say, you conceived a house or tree existing independent and out of all minds whatsoever?

HYLAS. That was I own an oversight; but stay, let me consider what led me into it.—It is a pleasant mistake enough. As I was thinking of a tree in a solitary place, where no one was present to see it, methought that was to conceive a tree as existing unperceived or unthought of, not considering that I myself conceived it all the while. But now I plainly see, that all I can do is to frame ideas in my own mind. I may indeed conceive in my own thoughts the idea of a tree, or a house, or a mountain, but that is all. And this is far from proving, that I can conceive them *existing out of the minds of all spirits*.

PHILONOUS. You acknowledge then that you cannot possibly conceive, how any one corporeal sensible thing should exist otherwise than in a mind.

HYLAS. I do.

PHILONOUS. And yet you will earnestly contend for the truth of that which you cannot so much as conceive.

HYLAS. I profess I know not what to think, but still there are some scruples remain with me. Is it not certain I see things at a distance? Do we not perceive the stars and moon, for example, to be a great way off? Is not this, I say, manifest to the senses?

PHILONOUS. Do you not in a dream too perceive those or the like objects?

HYLAS. I do.

PHILONOUS. And have they not then the same appearance of being distant?

HYLAS. They have.

PHILONOUS. But you do not thence conclude the apparitions in a dream to be without the mind?

HYLAS. By no means.

PHILONOUS. You ought not therefore to conclude that sensible objects are without the mind, from their appearance or manner wherein they are perceived.

HYLAS. I acknowledge it. But doth not my sense deceive me in those cases?

PHILONOUS. By no means. The idea or thing which you immediately perceive, neither sense nor reason inform you that it actually exists without the mind. By sense you only know that you are affected with such certain sensations of light and colours, &c. And these you will not say are without the mind.

HYLAS. True: but beside all that, do you not think the sight suggests something of *outness* or *distance*?

PHILONOUS. Upon approaching a distant object, do the visible size and figure change perpetually, or do they appear the same at all distances?

HYLAS. They are in a continual change.

PHILONOUS. Sight therefore doth not suggest or any way inform you, that the visible object you immediately perceive, exists at a distance,* or will be perceived when you advance farther onward, there being a continued series of visible objects succeeding each other, during the whole time of your approach.

HYLAS. It doth not; but still I know, upon seeing an object, what object I shall perceive after having passed over a certain dis-

* See the *Essay towards a new Theory of Vision*; and its *Vindication* [i.e., *Theory of Vision Vindicated*, 1733—Ed.].
(630)

tance : no matter whether it be exactly the same or no : there is still something of distance suggested in the case.

PHILONOUS. Good Hylas, do but reflect a little on the point, and then tell me whether there be any more in it than this. From the ideas you actually perceive by sight, you have by experience learned to collect what other ideas you will (according to the standing order of Nature) be affected with, after such a certain succession of time and motion.

HYLAS. Upon the whole, I take it to be nothing else.

10 PHILONOUS. Now is it not plain, that if we suppose a man born blind was on a sudden made to see, he could at first have no experience of what may be suggested by sight.

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. He would not then according to you have any notion of distance annexed to the things he saw ; but would take them for a new set of sensations existing only in his mind.

HYLAS. It is undeniable.

PHILONOUS. But to make it still more plain : Is not *distance* a line turned endwise to the eye ?

20 HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. And can a line so situated be perceived by sight ?

HYLAS. It cannot.

PHILONOUS. Doth it not therefore follow that distance is not properly and immediately perceived by sight ?

HYLAS. It should seem so.

PHILONOUS. Again, is it your opinion that colours are at a distance ?

HYLAS. It must be acknowledged, they are only in the mind.

PHILONOUS. But do not colours appear to the eye as coexisting in 30 the same place with extension and figures ?

HYLAS. They do.

PHILONOUS. How can you then conclude from sight, that figures exist without, when you acknowledge colours do not ; the sensible appearance being the very same with regard to both ?

HYLAS. I know not what to answer.

PHILONOUS. But allowing that distance was truly and immediately perceived by the mind, yet it would not thence follow it existed out of the mind. For whatever is immediately perceived is an idea : and can any *idea* exist out of the mind ?

40 HYLAS. To suppose that, were absurd : but inform me, Philonous, can we perceive or know nothing beside our ideas ?

PHILONOUS. As for the rational deducing of causes from effects,

that is beside our inquiry.¹ And by the senses you can best tell, whether you perceive any thing which is not immediately perceived. And I ask you, whether the things immediately perceived, are other than your own sensations or ideas? You have indeed more than once, in the course of this conversation, declared yourself on those points; but you seem by this last question to have departed from what you then thought.

HYLAS. To speak the truth, Philonous, I think there are two kinds of objects, the one perceived immediately, which are likewise called *ideas*; the other are real things or external objects perceived by the mediation of ideas, which are their images and representations. Now I own, ideas do not exist without the mind; but the latter sort of objects do. I am sorry I did not think of this distinction sooner; it would probably have cut short your discourse.

PHILONOUS. Are those external objects perceived by sense, or by some other faculty?

HYLAS. They are perceived by sense.

PHILONOUS. How! is there any thing perceived by sense, which is not immediately perceived?

HYLAS. Yes, Philonous, in some sort there is. For example, when I look on a picture or statue of Julius Cæsar, I may be said after a manner to perceive him (though not immediately) by my senses.

PHILONOUS. It seems then, you will have our ideas, which alone are immediately perceived, to be pictures of external things: and that these also are perceived by sense, inasmuch as they have a conformity or resemblance to our ideas.

HYLAS. That is my meaning.

PHILONOUS. And in the same way that Julius Cæsar, in himself invisible, is nevertheless perceived by sight; real things in themselves imperceptible, are perceived by sense.

HYLAS. In the very same.

PHILONOUS. Tell me, Hylas, when you behold the picture of Julius Cæsar, do you see with your eyes any more than some colours and figures with a certain symmetry and composition of the whole?

HYLAS. Nothing else.

PHILONOUS. And would not a man, who had never known any thing of Julius Cæsar, see as much?

¹ 6 declared—(A, B) expressed. 12 do not—(A, B) cannot.

¹ [I.e., in this Dialogue only, which is restricted to what is given in sense. The Second Dialogue passes to the consideration of causes.—Ed.]

HYLAS. He would.

PHILONOUS. Consequently he hath his sight, and the use of it, in as perfect a degree as you.

HYLAS. I agree with you.

PHILONOUS. Whence comes it then that your thoughts are directed to the Roman Emperor, and his are not? This cannot proceed from the sensations or ideas of sense by you then perceived; since you acknowledge you have no advantage over him in that respect. It should seem therefore to proceed from reason 10 and memory: should it not?

HYLAS. It should.

PHILONOUS. Consequently it will not follow from that instance, that any thing is perceived by sense which is not immediately perceived. Though I grant we may in one acceptation be said to perceive sensible things mediately by sense: that is, when from a frequently perceived connexion, the immediate perception of ideas by one sense suggests to the mind others perhaps belonging to another sense, which are wont to be connected with them. For instance, when I hear a coach drive along the 20 streets, immediately I perceive only the sound; but from the experience I have had that such a sound is connected with a coach, I am said to hear the coach. It is nevertheless evident, that in truth and strictness, nothing can be *heard* but *sound*: and the coach is not then properly perceived by sense, but suggested from experience. So likewise when we are said to see a red-hot bar of iron; the solidity and heat of the iron are not the objects of sight, but suggested to the imagination by the colour and figure, which are properly perceived by that sense. In short, those things alone are actually and strictly perceived 30 by any sense, which would have been perceived, in case that same sense had then been first conferred on us. As for other things, it is plain they are only suggested to the mind by experience grounded on former perceptions. But to return to your comparison of Caesar's picture, it is plain, if you keep to that, you must hold the real things or archetypes of our ideas are not perceived by sense, but by some internal faculty of the soul, as reason or memory. I would therefore fain know, what arguments you can draw from reason for the existence of what you call *real things* or *material objects*. Or whether you remember to 40 have seen them formerly as they are in themselves? or if you have heard or read of any one that did.

¹ 29 *actually and strictly perceived*—(*A, B*) *actually perceived*.

HYLAS. I see, Philonous, you are disposed to raillery ; but that will never convince me.

PHILONOUS. My aim is only to learn from you, the way to come at the knowledge of *material beings*. Whatver we perceive, is perceived either immediately or mediately : by sense, or by reason and reflexion. But as you have excluded sense, pray shew me what reason you have to believē their existence ; or what *medium* you can possibly make use of, to prove it either to mine or your own understanding.

HYLAS. To deal ingenuously, Philonous, now I consider the point, 10 I do not find I can give you any good reason for it. But thus much seems pretty plain, that it is at least possible such things may really exist. And as long as there is no absurdity in supposing them, I am resolved to believē as I did, till you bring good reasons to the contrary.

PHILONOUS. What ! is it come to this, that you only believe the existence of material objects, and that your belief is founded barely on the possibility of its being true ? Then you will have me bring reasons against it : though another would think it reasonable, the proof should lie on him who holds the affirmati- 20 vē. And after all, this very point which you are now resolved to maintain without any reason, is in effect what you have more than once during this discourse seen good reason to give up. But to pass over all this ; if I understand you rightly, you say our ideas do not exist without the mind ; but that they are copies, images, or representations of certain originals that do.

HYLAS. You take me right.

PHILONOUS. They are then like external things.

HYLAS. They are.

PHILONOUS. Have those things a stable and permanent nature 30 independent of our senses ; or are they in a perpetual change, upon our producing any motions in our bodies, suspending, exerting, or altering our faculties or organs of sense.

HYLAS. Real things, it is plain, have a fixed and real nature, which remains the same, notwithstanding any change in our senses, or in the posture and motion of our bodies ; which indeed may affect the ideas in our minds, but it were absurd to think they had the same effect on things existing without the mind.

PHILONOUS. How then is it possible, that things perpetually fleeting and variable as our ideas, should be copies or images of any 40 thing fixed and constant ? Or in other words, since all sensible

l 4 of material beings—(A, B) of those material beings.

qualities, as size, figure, colour, &c. that is, our ideas are continually changing upon every alteration in the distance, medium, or instruments of sensation ; how can any determinate material objects be properly represented or painted forth by several distinct things, each of which is so different from and unlike the rest ? Or if you say it resembles some one only of our ideas, how shall we be able to distinguish the true copy from all the false ones ?

HYLAS. I profess, Philonous, I am at a loss. I know not what to say
10 to this.

PHILONOUS. But neither is this all. Which are material objects in themselves, perceptible or imperceptible ?

HYLAS. Properly and immediately nothing can be perceived but ideas. All material things therefore are in themselves insensible, and to be perceived only by their ideas.

PHILONOUS. Ideas then are sensible, and their archetypes or originals insensible.

HYLAS. Right.

PHILONOUS. But how can that which is sensible be like that which
20 is insensible ? Can a real thing in itself *invisible* be like a *colour* ; or a real thing which is not *audible*, be like a *sound* ? In a word, can any thing be like a sensation or idea, but another sensation or idea ?

HYLAS. I must own, I think not.

PHILONOUS. Is it possible there should be any doubt in the point ? Do you not perfectly know your own ideas ? ¹

HYLAS. I know them perfectly ; since what I do not perceive or know, can be no part of my idea.

PHILONOUS. Consider therefore, and examine them, and then tell
30 me if there be any thing in them which can exist without the mind : or if you can conceive any thing like them existing without the mind.

HYLAS. Upon inquiry, I find it is impossible for me to conceive or understand how any thing but an idea can be like an idea. And it is most evident, that *no idea can exist without the mind*.

PHILONOUS. You are therefore by your principles forced to deny the reality of sensible things, since you made it to consist in an absolute existence exterior to the mind. That is to say, you are
40 a downright *sceptic*. So I have gained my point, which was to shew your principles led to scepticism.

¹ [See my note on *Principles*, Sect. 25.—Ed.]

HYLAS. For the present I am, if not entirely convinced, at least silenced.

PHILONOUS. I would fain know what more you would require in order to a perfect conviction. Have you not had the liberty of explaining yourself all manner of ways? Were any little slips in discourse laid hold and insisted on? Or were you not allowed to retract or reinforce any thing you had offered, as best served your purpose? Hath not every thing you could say been heard and examined with all the fairness imaginable? In a word, have you not in every point been convinced out of your own ¹⁰ mouth? And if you can at present discover any flaw in any of your former concessions, or think of any remaining subterfuge, any new distinction, colour, or comment whatsoever, why do you not produce it?

HYLAS. A little patience, Philonous. I am at present so amazed to see myself ensnared, and as it were imprisoned in the labyrinths you have drawn me into, that on the sudden it cannot be expected I should find my way out. You must give me time to look about me, and recollect myself.

PHILONOUS. Hark; is not this the college-bell?

20

HYLAS. It rings for prayers.

PHILONOUS. We will go in then if you please, and meet here again to-morrow morning. In the mean time you may employ your thoughts on this morning's discourse, and try if you can find any fallacy in it, or invent any new means to extricate yourself.

HYLAS. Agreed.

THE SECOND DIALOGUE

HYLAS. I beg your pardon, Philonous, for not meeting you sooner.

All this morning my head was so filled with our late conversation, that I had not leisure to think of the time of the day, or indeed of any thing else.

PHILONOUS. I am glad you were so intent upon it, in hopes if there were any mistakes in your concessions, or fallacies in my reasonings from them, you will now discover them to me.

HYLAS. I assure you, I have done nothing ever since I saw you, but search after mistakes and fallacies, and with that view have

10 minutely examined the whole series of yesterday's discourse : but all in vain, for the notions it led me into, upon review appear still more clear and evident ; and the more I consider them, the more irresistibly do they force my assent.

PHILONOUS. And is not this, think you, a sign that they are genuine, that they proceed from Nature, and are conformable to right reason ? Truth and beauty are in this alike, that the strictest survey sets them both off to advantage. While the false lustre of error and disguise cannot endure being reviewed, or too nearly inspected.

20 HYLAS. I own there is a great deal in what you say. Nor can any one be more entirely satisfied of the truth of those odd consequences, so long as I have in view the reasonings that lead to them. But when these are out of my thoughts, there seems on the other hand something so satisfactory, so natural and intelligible in the modern way of explaining things, that I profess I know not how to reject it.

PHILONOUS. I know not what way you mean.

HYLAS. I mean the way of accounting for our sensations or ideas.

PHILONOUS. How is that ?

30 HYLAS. It is supposed the soul makes her residence in some part of the brain, from which the nerves take their rise, and are thence extended to all parts of the body : and that outward objects by the different impressions they make on the organs of sense, communicate certain vibrative motions to the nerves ; and these being filled with spirits, propagate them to the brain

l 16 strictest—(A, B) nicest.

or seat of the soul, which according to the various impressions or traces thereby made in the brain, is various affected with ideas.

PHILONOUS. And call you this an explication of the manner whereby we are affected with ideas?

HYLAS. Why not, Philonous, have you any thing to object against it?

PHILONOUS. I would first know whether I rightly understand your hypothesis. You make certain traces in the brain to be the causes or occasions of our ideas. Pray tell me, whether by the ¹⁰ brain you mean any sensible thing?

HYLAS. What else think you I could mean?

PHILONOUS. Sensible things are all immediately perceptible ; and those things which are immediately perceptible, are ideas ; and these exist only in the mind. Thus much you have, if I mistake not, long since agreed to.

HYLAS. I do not deny it.

PHILONOUS. The brain therefore you speak of, being a sensible thing, exists only in the mind. Now, I would fain know whether you think it reasonable to suppose, that one idea or thing ²⁰ existing in the mind, occasions all other ideas. And if you think so, pray how do you account for the origin of that primary idea or brain itself?

HYLAS. I do not explain the origin of our ideas by that brain which is perceptible to sense, this being itself only a combination of sensible ideas, but by another which I imagine.

PHILONOUS. But are not things imagined as truly in the mind as things perceived?

HYLAS. I must confess they are.

PHILONOUS. It comes therefore to the same thing ; and you have ³⁰ been all this while accounting for ideas, by certain motions or impressions in the brain, that is, by some alterations in an idea, whether sensible or imaginable it matters not.

HYLAS. I begin to suspect my hypothesis.

PHILONOUS. Beside spirits, all that we know or conceive are our own ideas. When therefore you say, all ideas are occasioned by impressions in the brain, do you conceive this brain or no? If you do, then you talk of ideas imprinted in an idea, causing that same idea, which is absurd. If you do not conceive it, you talk unintelligibly, instead of forming a reasonable hypo- ⁴⁰ thesis.

131 this while—(A, B) the while.

HYLAS. I now clearly see it was a mere dream. There is nothing in it.

PHILONOUS. You need not be much concerned at it : for after all, this way of explaining things, as you called it, could never have satisfied any reasonable man. What connexion is there between a motion in the nerves, and the sensations of sound or colour in the mind ? or how is it possible these should be the effect of that ?

HYLAS. But I could never think it had so little in it, as now it
10 seems to have.

PHILONOUS. Well then, are you at length satisfied that no sensible things have a real existence ; and that you are in truth an arrant sceptic ?

HYLAS. It is too plain to be denied.

PHILONOUS. Look ! are not the fields covered with a delightful verdure ? Is there not something in the woods and groves, in the rivers and clear springs that soothes, that delights, that transports the soul ? At the prospect of the wide and deep ocean, or some huge mountain whose top is lost in the clouds, or of an old gloomy forest, are not our minds filled with a pleasing horror ? Even in rocks and deserts, is there not an agreeable wildness ? How sincere a pleasure is it to behold the natural beauties of the earth ! To preserve and renew our relish for them, is not the veil of night alternately drawn over her face, and doth she not change her dress with the seasons ? How aptly are the elements disposed ? What variety and use in the meanest productions of Nature ? What delicacy, what beauty, what contrivance in animal and vegetable bodies ? How exquisitely are all things suited, as well to their particular ends, 20 as to constitute apposite parts of the whole ! And while they mutually aid and support, do they not also set off and illustrate each other ? Raise now your thoughts from this ball of earth, to all those glorious luminaries that adorn the high arch of heaven. The motion and situation of the planets, are they not admirable for use and order ? Were those (miscalled *erratic*) globes ever known to stray, in their repeated journeys through the pathless void ? Do they not measure areas round the sun ever proportioned to the times ? So fixed, so immutable are the laws by which the unseen Author of Nature actuates the uni-

l 17 delights—(A, B) softens. l 19 clouds—(A, B) sky. l 26 in the meanest productions of Nature—(A, B) in stones and minerals. l 36 ever known—(A, B) once known.

verse. How vivid and radiant is the lustre of the fixed stars ! How magnificent and rich that negligent profusion, with which they appear to be scattered throughout the whole azure vault ! Yet if you take the telescope, it brings into your sight a new host of stars that escape the naked eye. Here they seem contiguous and minute, but to a nearer view immense orbs of light at various distances, far sunk in the abyss of space. Now you must call imagination to your aid. The feeble narrow sense cannot descry innumerable worlds revolving round the central fires ; and in those worlds the energy of an all-perfect mind displayed 10 in endless forms. But neither sense nor imagination are big enough to comprehend the boundless extent with all its glittering furniture. Though the labouring mind exert and strain each power to its utmost reach, there still stands out ungrasped a surplusage immeasurable. Yet all the vast bodies that compose this mighty frame, how distant and remote soever, are by some secret mechanism, some divine art and force linked in a mutual dependence and intercourse with each other, even with this earth, which was almost slipt from my thoughts, and lost in the crowd of worlds. Is not the whole system immense, beautiful, 20 glorious beyond expression and beyond thought ! What treatment then do those philosophers deserve, who would deprive these noble and delightful scenes of all reality ? How should those principles be entertained, that lead us to think all the visible beauty of the creation a false imaginary glare ? To be plain, can you expect this scepticism of yours will not be thought extravagantly absurd by all men of sense ?

HYLAS. Other men may think as they please : but for your part you have nothing to reproach me with. My comfort is, you are as much a *sceptic* as I am.

PHILONOUS. There, Hylas, I must beg leave to differ from you.

HYLAS. What ! have you all along agreed to the premises, and do you now deny the conclusion, and leave me to maintain those paradoxes by myself which you led me into ? This surely is not fair.

PHILONOUS. I deny that I agreed with you in those notions that led to scepticism. You indeed said, the reality of sensible things consisted in an *absolute existence* out of the minds of spirits, or distinct from their being perceived. And pursuant to this notion of reality, you are obliged to deny sensible things any 40

l 3 throughout—(A, B) *thorow*. *l 12 glittering*—(A, B) *dazzling*. *l 19 which was almost*—(A, B) *which almost*.

real existence : that is, according to your own definition, you profess yourself a *sceptic*. But I neither said nor thought the reality of sensible things was to be defined after that manner. To me it is evident, for the reasons you allow of, that sensible things cannot exist otherwise than in a mind or spirit. Whence I conclude, not that they have no real existence, but that seeing they depend not on my thought, and have an existence distinct from being perceived by me, *there must be some other mind wherein they exist*. As sure therefore as the sensible world really exists, so sure is there an infinite omnipresent spirit who contains and supports it.

HYLAS. What ! this is no more than I and all Christians hold ; nay, and all others too who believe there is a God, and that he knows and comprehends all things.

PHILONOUS. Ay, but here lies the difference. Men commonly believe that all things are known or perceived by God, because they believe the being of a God, whereas I on the other side, immediately and necessarily conclude the being of a God, because all sensible things must be perceived by him.

20 HYLAS. But so long as we all believe the same thing, what matter is it how we come by that belief ?

PHILONOUS. But neither do we agree in the same opinion. For philosophers, though they acknowledge all corporeal beings to be perceived by God, yet they attribute to them an absolute subsistence distinct from their being perceived by any mind whatever, which I do not. Besides, is there no difference between saying, *there is a God, therefore he perceives all things* : and saying, *sensible things do really exist : and if they really exist, they are necessarily perceived by an infinite mind : therefore there is an infinite mind, or God*. This furnishes you with a direct and immediate demonstration, from a most evident principle, of the *being of a God*. Divines and philosophers had proved beyond all controversy, from the beauty and usefulness of the several parts of the creation, that it was the workmanship of God. But that setting aside all help of astronomy and natural philosophy, all contemplation of the contrivance, order, and adjustment of things, an infinite mind should be necessarily inferred from the bare existence of the sensible world, is an advantage peculiar to them only who have made this easy reflexion : that the sensible world is that which we perceive by our several senses ; and that nothing is perceived by the senses beside ideas ; and that no

idea or archetypc of an idea can exist otherwise than in a mind. You may now, without any laborious search into the sciences, without any subtlety of reason, or tedious length of discourse, oppose and baffle the most strenuous advocate for atheism. Those miserable refuges, whether in an eternal succession of un-thinking causes and effects, or in a fortuitous concourse of atoms ; those wild imaginations of Vanini,¹ Hobbes, and Spinoza ; in a word the whole system of atheism, is it not entirely overthrown by this single reflexion on the repugnancy included in supposing the whole, or any part, even the most rude and 10 shapeless of the visible world, to exist without a mind ? Let any one of those abettors of impiety but look into his own thoughts, and there try if he can conceive how so much as a rock, a desert, a chaos, or confused jumble of atoms ; how any thing at all, either sensible or imaginable, can exist independent of a mind, and he need go no farther to be convinced of his folly. Can any thing be fairer than to put a dispute on such an issue, and leave it to a man himself to see if he can conceive, even in thought, what he holds to be true in fact, and from a notional to allow it a real existence ?

20

HYLAS. It cannot be denied, thiere is something highly serviceable to religion in what you advance. But do you not think it looks very like a notion entertained by some eminent moderns, of *seeing all things in God*? ²

PHILONOUS. I would gladly know that opinion ; pray explain it to me.

HYLAS. They conceive that the soul being immaterial, is incapable of being united with material things, so as to perceive them in themselves, but that she perceives them by her union with the substance of God, which being spiritual is therefore purely 30 intelligible, or capable of being the immediate object of a spirit's thought. Besides, the divine essence contains in it perfections correspondent to each created being ; and which are for that reason proper to exhibit or represent them to the mind.

PHILONOUS. I do not understand how our ideas, which are things altogether passive and inert, can be the essence, or any part (or like any part) of the essence or substance of God, who is an

¹ [Lucilio Vanini, a Neapolitan priest, was burned at the stake in 1619 on the charge of atheism, 'so devoted to atheisme, that out of a perfect mad zeale to that despicable cause he died for it' (Henry More, *Immortality of the Soul*, 1659, p. 66). In his *De admirandis naturae reginæ* (1616) he maintained the eternity of matter.—Ed.] ² [I.e. Malebranche. See above, p. 153.—Ed.]

impassive, indivisible, purely active being. Many more difficulties and objections there are, which occur at first view against this hypothesis ; but I shall only add that it is liable to all the absurdities of the common hypotheses, in making a created world exist otherwise than in the mind of a spirit. Beside all which it hath this peculiar to itself ; that it makes that material world serve to no purpose. And if it pass for a good argument against other hypotheses in the sciences, that they suppose Nature or the divine wisdom to make something in vain, or do
 10 that by tedious round-about methods, which might have been performed in a much more easy and compendious way, what shall we think of that hypothesis which supposes the whole world made in vain ?

HYLAS. But what say you, are not you too of opinion that we see all things in God ? If I mistake not, what you advance comes near it.

PHILONOUS. Few men think, yet all will have opinions. Hence men's opinions are superficial and confused. It is nothing strange that tenets, which in themselves are ever so different,
 20 should nevertheless be confounded with each other by those who do not consider them attentively. I shall not therefore be surprised, if some men imagine that I run into the enthusiasm of Malbranche, though in truth I am very remote from it. He builds on the most abstract general ideas, which I entirely disclaim. He asserts an absolute external world, which I deny. He maintains that we are deceived by our senses, and know not the real natures or the true forms and figures of extended beings ; of all which I hold the direct contrary. So that upon the whole there are no principles more
 30 fundamentally opposite than his and mine. It must be owned I entirely agree with what the holy Scripture faith, *that in God we live, and move, and have our being*. But that we see things in his essence after the manner above set forth, I am far from believing, Take here in brief my meaning. It is evident that the things I perceive are my own ideas, and that no idea can exist unless it be in a mind. Nor is it less plain that these ideas or things by me perceived, either themselves or their archetypes, exist independently of my mind, since I know myself not to be their author, it being out of my power to determine at pleasure, what
 40 particular ideas I shall be affected with upon opening my eyes or ears. They must therefore exist in some other mind, whose

l 17 Few men think. . . . It must be owned—(C only).

will it is they should be exhibited to me. The things, I say, immediately perceived, are ideas or sensations, call them which you will. But how can any idea or sensation exist in, or be produced by, any thing but a mind or spirit? This indeed is inconceivable; and to assert that which is inconceivable, is to talk nonsense: Is it not?

HYLAS. Without doubt.

PHILONOUS. But on the other hand, it is very conceivable that they should exist in, and be produced by, a spirit; since this is no more than I daily experience in myself, inasmuch as I perceive ¹⁰ numberless ideas; and by an act of my Will can form a great variety of them, and raise them up in my imagination: though it must be confessed, these creatures of the fancy are not altogether so distinct, so strong, vivid, and permanent, as those perceived by my senses, which latter are called *real things*. From all which I conclude, *there is a mind which affects me every moment with all the sensible impressions I perceive*. And from the variety, order, and manner of these, I conclude the Author of them to be *wise, powerful, and good, beyond comprehension*. Mark it well; I do not say, I see things by perceiving that which ²⁰ represents them in the intelligible substance of God. This I do not understand; but I say, the things by me perceived are known by the understanding, and produced by the will, of an infinite spirit. And is not all this most plain and evident? Is there any more in it, than what a little observation of our own minds, and that which passes in them not only enableth us to conceive, but also obligeth us to acknowledge?

HYLAS. I think I understand you very clearly; and own the proof you give of a Deity seems no less evident, than it is surprising. But allowing that God is the Supreme and Universal ³⁰ Cause of all things, yet may not there be still a third nature besides spirits and ideas? May we not admit a subordinate and limited cause of our ideas? In a word, may there not for all that be *matter*?

PHILONOUS. How often must I inculcate the same thing? You allow the things immediately perceived by sense to exist nowhere without the mind: but there is nothing perceived by sense, which is not perceived immediately: therefore there is nothing sensible that exists without the mind. The matter therefore which you still insist on, is something intelligible, I suppose; ⁴⁰ something that may be discovered by reason, and not by sense.

HYLAS. You are in the right.

PHILONOUS. Pray let me know what reasoning your belief of matter is grounded on ; and what this matter is in your present sense of it.

HYLAS. I find myself affected with various ideas, whereof I know I am not the cause ; neither are they the cause of themselves, or of one another, or capable of subsisting by themselves, as being altogether inactive, fleeting, dependent beings. They have therefore some cause distinct from me and them : of which I pretend to know no more, than that it is *the cause of my ideas*.

10 HYLAS. And this thing, whatever it be, I call matter.

PHILONOUS. Tell me, Hylas, hath every one a liberty to change the current proper signification annexed to a common name in any language ? For example, suppose a traveller should tell you, that in a certain country men might pass unhurt through the fire ; and, upon explaining himself, you found he meant by the word *fire* that which others call *water* : or if he should assert there are trees which walk upon two legs, meaning men by the term *trees*. Would you think this reasonable ?

HYLAS. No ; I should think it very absurd. Common custom is 20 the standard of propriety in language. And for any man to affect speaking improperly, is to pervert the use of speech, and can never serve to a better purpose, than to protract and multiply disputes where there is no difference in opinion.

PHILONOUS. And doth not *matter*, in the common current acceptation of the word, signify an extended, solid, moveable, unthinking, inactive substance ?

HYLAS. It doth.

PHILONOUS. And hath it not been made evident, that no such substance can possibly exist ? And though it should be allowed 30 to exist, yet how can that which is *inactive*¹ be a *cause* ; or that which is *unthinking* be a *cause of thought* ? You may indeed, if you please, annex to the word *matter* a contrary meaning to what is vulgarly received ; and tell me you understand by it an unextended, thinking, active being, which is the cause of our ideas. But what else is this, than to play with words, and run into that very fault you just now condemned with so much reason ? I do by no means find fault with your reasoning, in that you collect a cause from the phenomena : but I deny that the cause deducible by reason can properly be termed *matter*.

40 HYLAS. There is indeed something in what you say. But I am

¹ ['Inactive' means 'inert', not *originating* change. *Cp.* 'motion being allowed to be no action' (below, p. 217).—Ed.]

afraid you do not thoroughly comprehend my meaning. I would by no means be thought to deny that God or an Infinite Spirit is the supreme cause of all things. All I contend for, is, that subordinate to the supreme agent there is a cause of a limited and inferior nature, which concurs in the production of our ideas, not by any act of will or spiritual efficiency, but by that kind of action which belongs to matter, *viz. motion*.

PHILONOUS. I find, you are at every turn relapsing into your old exploded conceit, of a moveable and consequently an extended substance existing without the mind. What ! Have you already 10 forgot you were convinced, or are you willing I should repeat what has been said on that head ? In truth this is not fair dealing in you, still to suppose the being of that which you have so often acknowledged to have no being. But not to insist farther on what has been so largely handled, I ask whether all your ideas are not perfectly passive and inert, including nothing of action in them ?

HYLAS. They are.

PHILONOUS. And are sensible qualities any thing else but ideas ? 20

HYLAS. How often have I acknowledged that they are not ?

PHILONOUS. But is not motion a sensible quality ?

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. Consequently it is no action.

HYLAS. I agree with you. And indeed it is very plain, that when I stir my finger, it remains passive ; but my will which produced the motion, is active.

PHILONOUS. Now I desire to know in the first place, whether motion being allowed to be no action, you can conceive any action besides volition : and in the second place, whether to 30 say something and conceive nothing be not to talk nonsense : and lastly, whether having considered the premises, you do not perceive that to suppose any efficient or active cause of our ideas, other than *spirit*, is highly absurd and unreasonable ?

HYLAS. I give up the point entirely. But though matter may not be a cause, yet what hinders its being an *instrument* subservient to the supreme agent in the production of our ideas ?

PHILONOUS. An instrument, say you ; pray what may be the figure, springs, wheels, and motions of that instrument ?

HYLAS. Those I pretend to determine nothing of, both the substance and its qualities being entirely unknown to me.

PHILONOUS. What ? You are then of opinion, it is made up of

unknown parts, that it hath unknown motions, and an unknown shape.

HYLAS. I do not believe it hath any figure or motion at all, being already convinced, that no sensible qualities can exist in an unperceiving substance.

PHILONOUS. But what notion is it possible to frame of an instrument void of all sensible qualities, even extension itself?

HYLAS. I do not pretend to have any notion of it.

PHILONOUS. And what reason have you to think, this unknown,
10 this inconceivable somewhat doth exist? Is it that you imagine God cannot act as well without it, or that you find by experience the use of some such thing, when you form ideas in your own mind?

HYLAS. You are always teasing me for reasons of my belief. Pray, what reasons have you not to believe it?

PHILONOUS. It is to me a sufficient reason not to believe the existence of any thing, if I see no reason for believng it. But not to insist on reasons for believing, you will not so much as let me know what it is you would have me believe, since you say
20 you have no manner of notion of it. After all, let me entreat you to consider whether it be like a philosopher, or even like a man of common sense, to pretend to believe you know not what, and you know not why.

HYLAS. Hold, Philonous. When I tell you matter is an *instrument*, I do not mean altogether nothing. It is true, I know not the particular kind of instrument; but however I have some notion of *instrument in general*, which I apply to it.

PHILONOUS. But what if it should prove that there is something, even in the most general notion of *instrument*, as taken in a distinct sense from *cause*, which makes the use of it inconsistent with the divine attributes?

HYLAS. Make that appear, and I shall give up the point.

PHILONOUS. What mean you by the general nature or notion of *instrument*?

HYLAS. That which is common to all particular instruments, composeth the general notion.

PHILONOUS. Is it not common to all instruments, that they are applied to the doing those things only, which cannot be performed by the mere act of our wills? Thus for instance, I never
40 use an instrument to move my finger, because it is done by a volition. But I should use one, if I were to remove part of a rock, or tear up a tree by the roots. Are you of the same mind?

Or can you shew any example where an instrument is made use of in producing an effect immediately depending on the will of the agent ?

HYLAS. I own, I cannot.

PHILONOUS. How therefore can you suppose, that an all-perfect spirit, on whose will all things have an absolute and immediate dependence, should need an instrument in his operations, or not needing it make use of it ? Thus it seems to me that you are obliged to own the use of a lifeless inactive instrument, to be incompatible with the infinite perfection of God ; that is, by 10 your own confession, to give up the point.

HYLAS. It doth not readily occur what I can answer you.

PHILONOUS. But methinks you should be ready to own the truth, when it hath been fairly proved to you. We indeed, who are beings of finite powers, are forced to make use of instruments. And the use of an instrument sheweth the agent to be limited by rules of another's prescription, and that he cannot obtain his end, but in such a way and by such conditions. Whence it seems a clear consequence, that the supreme unlimited agent useth no tool or instrument at all. The will of an omnipotent 20 spirit is no sooner exerted than executed, without the application of means, which, if they are employed by inferior agents, it is not upon account of any real efficacy that is in them, or necessary aptitude to produce any effect, but merely in compliance with the laws of Nature, or those conditions prescribed to them by the first cause, who is himself above all limitation or prescription whatsoever.

HYLAS. I will no longer maintain that matter is an instrument. However, I would not be understood to give up its existence neither ; since, notwithstanding what hath been said, it may 30 still be an *occasion*.

PHILONOUS. How many shapes is your matter to take ? Or how often must it be proved not to exist, before you are content to part with it ? But to say no more of this (though by all the laws of disputation I may justly blame you for so frequently changing the signification of the principal term) I would fain know what you mean by affirming that matter is an occasion, having already denied it to be a cause. And when you have shewn in what sense you understand *occasion*, pray in the next place be pleased to shew me what reason induceth you to believe 40 there is such an occasion of our ideas.

HYLAS. As to the first point : by *occasion* I mean an inactive un-

thinking being, at the presence whereof God excites ideas in our minds.

PHILONOUS. And what may be the nature of that inactive unthinking being?

HYLAS. I know nothing of its nature.

PHILONOUS. Proceed then to the second point, and assign some reason why we should allow an existence to this inactive, unthinking, unknown thing.

HYLAS. When we see ideas produced in our minds after an orderly 10 and constant manner, it is natural to think they have some fixed and regular occasions, at the presence of which they are excited.

PHILONOUS. You acknowledge then God alone to be the cause of our ideas, and that he causes them at the presence of those occasions.

HYLAS. That is my opinion.

PHILONOUS. Those things which you say are present to God, without doubt He perceives.

HYLAS. Certainly; otherwise they could not be to Him an occasion of acting.

20 PHILONOUS. Not to insist now on your making sense of this hypothesis, or answering all the puzzling questions and difficulties it is liable to: I only ask whether the order and regularity observable in the series of our ideas, or the course of Nature, be not sufficiently accounted for by the wisdom and power of God; and whether it doth not derogate from those attributes, to suppose He is influenced, directed, or put in mind, when and what He is to act, by any unthinking substance. And lastly whether, in case I granted all you contend for, it would make any thing to your purpose, it not being easy to conceive how

30 the external or absolute existence of an unthinking substance, distinct from its being perceived, can be inferred from my allowing that there are certain things perceived by the mind of God, which are to Him the occasion of producing ideas in us.

HYLAS. I am perfectly at a loss what to think, this notion of *occasion* seeming now altogether as groundless as the rest.

PHILONOUS. Do you not at length perceive, that in all these different acceptations of *matter*, you have been only supposing you know not what, for no manner of reason, and to no kind of use?

40 HYLAS. I freely own my self less fond of my notions, since they have been so accurately examined. But still, methinks I have some confused perception that there is such a thing as *matter*.

PHILONOUS. Either you perceive the being of matter immediately, or mediately. If immediately, pray inform me by which of the senses you perceive it. If mediately, let me know by what reasoning it is inferred from those things which you perceive immediately. So much for the perception. Then for the matter it self, I ask whether it is object, *substratum*, cause, instrument, or occasion? You have already pleaded for each of these, shifting your notions, and making matter to appear sometimes in one shape, then in another. And what you have offered hath been disapproved and rejected by your self. If you have anything new to advance, I would gladly hear it.

HYLAS. I think I have already offered all I had to say on those heads. I am at a loss what more to urge.

PHILONOUS. And yet you are loth to part with your old prejudice. But to make you quit it more easily, I desire that, beside what has been hitherto suggested, you will farther consider whether, upon supposition that matter exists, you can possibly conceive how you should be affected by it? Or supposing it did not exist, whether it be not evident you might for all that be affected with the same ideas you now are, and consequently have the very same reasons to believe its existence that you now can have?

HYLAS. I acknowledge it is possible we might perceive all things just as we do now, though there was no matter in the world; neither can I conceive, if there be matter, how it should produce any idea in our minds. And I do farther grant, you have entirely satisfied me, that it is impossible there should be such a thing as matter in any of the foregoing acceptations. But still I cannot help supposing that there is *matter* in some sense or other. What that is I do not indeed pretend to determine.

PHILONOUS. I do not expect you should define exactly the nature of that unknown being. Only be pleased to tell me, whether it is a substance: and if so, whether you can suppose a substance without accidents; or in case you suppose it to have accidents or qualities, I desire you will let me know what those qualities are, at least what is meant by matter's supporting them.

HYLAS. We have already argued on those points. I have no more to say to them. But to prevent any farther questions, let me tell you, I at present understand by *matter* neither substance nor accident, thinking nor extended being, neither cause, instrument, nor occasion, but something entirely unknown, distinct from all these.

PHILONOUS. It seems then you include in your present notion of matter, nothing but the general abstract idea of *entity*.

HYLAS. Nothing else, save only that I super-add to this general idea the negation of all those particular things, qualities, or ideas that I perceive, imagine, or in any wise apprehend.

PHILONOUS. Pray where do you suppose this unknown matter to exist ?

HYLAS. Oh Philonous ! now you think you have entangled me ; for if I say it exists in place, then you will infer that it exists in 10 the mind, since it is agreed, that place or extension exists only in the mind : but I am not ashamed to own my ignorance. I know not where it exists ; only I am sure it exists not in place. There is a negative answer for you : and you must expect no other to all the questions you put for the future about matter.

PHILONOUS. Since you will not tell me where it exists, be pleased to inform me after what manner you suppose it to exist, or what you mean by its *existence*.

HYLAS. It neither thinks nor acts, neither perceives, nor is perceived.

20 PHILONOUS. But what is there positive in your abstracted notion of its existence ?

HYLAS. Upon a nice observation, I do not find I have any positive notion or meaning at all. I tell you again I am not ashamed to own my ignorance. I know not what is meant by its *existence*, or how it exists.

PHILONOUS. Continue, good Hylas, to act the same ingenuous part, and tell me sincerely whether you can frame a distinct idea of entity in general, prescinded from and exclusive of all thinking and corporeal beings, all particular things whatsoever.

30 HYLAS. Hold, let me think a little— I profess, Philonous, I do not find that I can. At first glance methought I had some dilute and airy notion of pure entity in abstract ; but upon closer attention it hath quite vanished out of sight. The more I think on it, the more am I confirmed in my prudent resolution of giving none but negative answers, and not pretending to the least degree of any positive knowledge or conception of matter, its *where*, its *how*, its *entity*, or any thing belonging to it.

PHILONOUS. When therefore you speak of the existence of matter, you have not any notion in your mind.

40 HYLAS. None at all.

PHILONOUS. Pray tell me if the case stands not thus : at first, from a belief of material substance you would have it that the

immediate objects existed without the mind ; then that their archetypes ; then causes ; next instruments ; then occasions : lastly, *something in general*, which being interpreted proves *nothing*. So matter comes to nothing. What think you, Hylas, is not this a fair summary of your whole proceeding ?

HYLAS. Be that as it will, yet I still insist upon it, that our not being able to conceive a thing, is no argument against its existence.

PHILONOUS. That from a cause, effect, operation, sign, or other circumstance, there may reasonably be inferred the existence of a thing not immediately perceived, and that it were absurd ¹⁰ for any man to argue against the existence of that thing, from his having no direct and positive notion of it, I freely own. But where there is nothing of all this ; where neither reason nor revelation induce us to believe the existence of a thing ; where we have not even a relative notion of it ; where an abstraction is made from perceiving and being perceived, from spirit and idea : lastly, where there is not so much as the most inadequate or faint idea pretended to : I will not indeed thence conclude against the reality of any notion or existence of any thing : but my inference shall be, that you mean nothing at all : ²⁰ that you employ words to no manner of purpose, without any design or signification whatsoever. And I leave it to you to consider how mere jargon should be treated.

HYLAS. To deal frankly with you, Philonous, your arguments seem in themselves unanswerable, but they have not so great an effect on me as to produce that entire conviction, that hearty acquiescence which attends demonstration. I find myself still relapsing into an obscure surmise of I know not what, *matter*.

PHILONOUS. But are you not sensible, Hylas, that two things must concur to take away all scruple, and work a plenary assent in the ³⁰ mind ? Let a visible object be set in never so clear a light, yet if there is any imperfection in the sight, or if the eye is not directed towards it, it will not be distinctly seen. And though a demonstration be never so well grounded and fairly proposed, yet if there is withal a stain of prejudice, or a wrong bias on the understanding, can it be expected on a sudden to perceive clearly and adhere firmly to the truth ? No, there is need of time and pains : the attention must be awakened and detained by a frequent repetition of the same thing placed oft in the same, oft in different lights. I have said it already, and find I must ⁴⁰ still repeat and inculcate, that it is an unaccountable licence

¹¹⁷ lastly—(A, B) in fine.

you take in pretending to maintain you know not what, for you know not what reason, to you know not what purpose? Can this be paralleled in any art or science, any sect or profession of men? Or is there any thing so barefacedly groundless and unreasonable to be met with even in the lowest of common conversation? But perhaps you will still say, matter may exist, though at the same time you neither know what is meant by *matter*, or by its *existence*. This indeed is surprising, and the more so because it is altogether voluntary, you not being led to it by 10 any one reason; for I challenge you to shew me that thing in Nature which needs matter to explain or account for it.

HYLAS. The reality of things cannot be maintained without supposing the existence of matter. And is not this, think you, a good reason why I should be earnest in its defence?

PHILONOUS. The reality of things! What things, sensible or intelligible?

HYLAS. Sensible things.

PHILONOUS. My glove, for example?

HYLAS. That or any other thing perceived by the senses.

20 PHILONOUS. But to fix on some particular thing; is it not a sufficient evidence to me of the existence of this *glove*, that I see it, and feel it, and wear it? Or if this will not do, how is it possible I should be assured of the reality of this thing, which I actually see in this place, by supposing that some unknown thing which I never did or can see, exists after an unknown manner, in an unknown place, or in no place at all? How can the supposed reality of that which is intangible, be a proof that any thing tangible really exists? or of that which is invisible, that any visible thing, or in general of any thing which is imperceptible, 30 that a perceptible exists? Do but explain this, and I shall think nothing too hard for you.

HYLAS. Upon the whole, I am content to own the existence of matter is highly improbable; but the direct and absolute impossibility of it does not appear to me.

PHILONOUS. But granting matter to be possible, yet upon that account merely it can have no more claim to existence, than a golden mountain or a centaur.

HYLAS. I acknowledge it; but still you do not deny it is possible; and that which is possible, for aught you know, may actually 40 exist.

PHILONOUS. I deny it to be possible; and have, if I mistake not, 19 voluntary—(A, B) voluntary and of your own head.

evidently proved from your own concessions that it is not. In the common sense of the word *matter*, is there any more implied, than an extended, solid, figured, moveable substance existing without the mind? And have not you acknowledged over and over, that you have seen evident reason for denying the possibility of such a substance?

HYLAS. True, but that is only one sense of the term *matter*.

PHILONOUS. But is it not the only proper genuine received sense? And if matter in such a sense be proved impossible, may it not be thought with good grounds absolutely impossible? ¹⁰ Else how could any thing be proved impossible? Or indeed how could there be any proof at all one way or other, to a man who takes the liberty to unsettle and change the common signification of words?

HYLAS. I thought philosophers might be allowed to speak more accurately than the vulgar, and were not always confined to the common acceptation of a term.

PHILONOUS. But this now mentioned is the common received sense among philosophers themselves. But not to insist on that, have you not been allowed to take matter in what sense you ²⁰ pleased? And have you not used this privilege in the utmost extent, sometimes entirely changing, at others leaving out or putting into the definition of it whatever for the present best served your design, contrary to all the known rules of reason and logic? And hath not this shifting unfair method of yours spun out our dispute to an unnecessary length; matter having been particularly examined, and by your own confession refuted in each of those senses? And can any more be required to prove the absolute impossibility of a thing, than the proving it impossible in every particular sense, that either you or any ³⁰ one else understands it in?

HYLAS. But I am not so thoroughly satisfied that you have proved the impossibility of matter in the last most obscure abstracted and indefinite sense.

PHILONOUS. When is a thing shewn to be impossible?

HYLAS. When a repugnancy is demonstrated between the ideas comprehended in its definition.

PHILONOUS. But where there are no ideas, there no repugnancy can be demonstrated between ideas.

HYLAS. I agree with you.

PHILONOUS. Now in that which you call the obscure indefinite sense of the word *matter*, it is plain, by your own confession, there

was included no idea at all, no sense except an unknown sense, which is the same thing as none. You are not therefore to expect I should prove a repugnancy between ideas where there are no ideas ; or the impossibility of matter taken in an *unknown* sense, that is no sense at all. My business was only to shew, you meant *nothing* ; and this you were brought to own. So that in all your various senses, you have been shewed either to mean nothing at all, or if any thing, an absurdity. And if this be not sufficient to prove the impossibility of a thing, I desire you will
10 let me know what is.

HYLAS. I acknowledge you have proved that matter is impossible ; nor do I see what more can be said in defence of it. But at the same time that I give up this, I suspect all my other notions. For surely none could be more seemingly evident than this once was : and yet it now seems as false and absurd as ever it did true before. But I think we have discussed the point sufficiently for the present. The remaining part of the day I would willingly spend, in running over in my thoughts the several heads of this morning's conversation, and to-morrow shall be
20 glad to meet you here again about the same time.

PHILONOUS. I will not fail to attend you.

THE THIRD DIALOGUE

PHILONOUS. Tell me, Hylas, what are the fruits of yesterday's meditation? Hath it confirmed you in the same mind you were in at parting? or have you since seen cause to change your opinion?

HYLAS. Truly my opinion is, that all our opinions are alike vain and uncertain. What we approve to-day, we condemn to-morrow. We keep a stir about knowledge, and spend our lives in the pursuit of it, when, alas! we know nothing all the while: nor do I think it possible for us ever to know any thing in this life. Our faculties are too narrow and too few. Nature certainly ¹⁰ never intended us for speculation.

PHILONOUS. What! say you we can know nothing, Hylas?

HYLAS. There is not that single thing in the world, whereof we can know the real nature, or what it is in itself.

PHILONOUS. Will you tell me I do not really know what fire or water is?

HYLAS. You may indeed know that fire appears hot, and water fluid: but this is no more than knowing what sensations are produced in your own mind, upon the application of fire and water to your organs of sense. Their internal constitution, their ²⁰ true and real nature, you are utterly in the dark as to *that*.

PHILONOUS. Do I not know this to be a real stone that I stand on, and that which I see before my eyes to be a real tree?

HYLAS. *Know*? No, it is impossible you or any man alive should know it. All you know, is, that you have such a certain idea or appearance in your own mind. But what is this to the real tree or stone? I tell you, that colour, figure, and hardness, which you perceive, are not the real natures of those things, or in the least like them. The same may be said of all other real things or corporeal substances which compose the world. They ³⁰ have none of them any thing in themselves, like those sensible qualitics by us perceived. We should not therefore pretend to affirm or know any thing of them as they are in their own nature.

PHILONOUS. But surely, Hylas, I can distinguish gold, for example,
l 1 Tell me, Hylas—(A, B) So, Hylas. l 28 not the real—(A, B) not at all the real.

from iron : and how could this be if I knew not what either truly was ?

HYLAS. Believe me, Philonous, you can only distinguish between your own ideas. That yellowness, that weight, and other sensible qualities, think you they are really in the gold ? They are only relative to the senses, and have no absolute existence in Nature. And in pretending to distinguish the species of real things, by the appearances in your mind, you may perhaps act as wisely as he that should conclude two men were of a different species, because their clothes were not of the same colour.

PHILONOUS. It seems then we are altogether put off with the appearances of things, and those false ones too. The very meat I eat, and the cloth I wear, have nothing in them like what I see and feel.

HYLAS. Even so.

PHILONOUS. But is it not strange the whole world should be thus imposed on, and so foolish as to believe their senses ? And yet I know not how it is, but men eat, and drink, and sleep, and perform all the offices of life as comfortably and conveniently, as if they really knew the things they are conversant about.

HYLAS. They do so : but you know ordinary practice does not require a nicety of speculative knowledge. Hence the vulgar retain their mistakes, and for all that, make a shift to bustle through the affairs of life. But philosophers know better things.

PHILONOUS. You mean, they know that they *know nothing*.

HYLAS. That is the very top and perfection of human knowledge.

PHILONOUS. But are you all this while in earnest, Hylas ; and are you seriously persuaded that you know nothing real in the world ? Suppose you are going to write, would you not call for pen, ink, and paper, like another man ; and do you not know what it is you call for ?

HYLAS. How often must I tell you, that I know not the real nature of any one thing in the universe ? I may indeed upon occasion make use of pen, ink, and paper. But what any one of them is in its own true nature, I declare positively I know not. And the same is true with regard to every other corporeal thing. And, what is more, we are not only ignorant of the true and real nature of things, but even of their existence. It cannot be denied that we perceive such certain appearances or ideas ; but it cannot be concluded from thence that bodies really exist.

Nay, now I think on it, I must agreeably to my former concessions farther declare, that it is impossible any real corporeal thing should exist in Nature.

PHILONOUS. You amaze me. Was ever any thing more wild and extravagant than the notions you now maintain : and is it not evident you are led into all these extravagancies by the belief of *material substance*? This makes you dream of those unknown natures in every thing. It is this occasions your distinguishing between the reality and sensible appearances of things. It is to this you are indebted for being ignorant of what every body else ¹⁰ knows perfectly well. Nor is this all : you are not only ignorant of the true nature of every thing, but you know not whether any thing really exists, or whether there are any true natures at all ; forasmuch as you attribute to your material beings an absolute or external existence, wherein you suppose their reality consists. And as you are forced in the end to acknowledge such an existence means either a direct repugnancy, or nothing at all, it follows that you are obliged to pull down your own hypothesis of material substance, and positively to deny the real existence of any part of the universe. And so ²⁰ you are plunged into the deepest and most deplorable *scepticism* that ever man was. Tell me, Hylas, is it not as I say ?

HYLAS. I agree with you. *Material substance* was no more than an hypothesis, and a false and groundless one too. I will no longer spend my breath in defence of it. But whatever hypothesis you advance, or whatsoever scheme of things you introduce in its stead, I doubt not it will appear every whit as false : let me but be allowed to question you upon it. That is, suffer me to serve you in your own kind, and I warrant it shall conduct you through as many perplexities and contradictions, to the very ³⁰ same state of scepticism that I my self am in at present.

PHILONOUS. I assure you, Hylas, I do not pretend to frame any hypothesis at all. I am of a vulgar cast, simple enough to believe my senses, and leave things as I find them. To be plain, it is my opinion, that the real things are those very things I see and feel, and perceive by my senses. These I know, and finding they answer all the necessities and purposes of life, have no reason to be solicitous about any other unknown beings. A piece of sensible bread, for instance, would stay my stomach better than ten thousand times as much of that insensible, ⁴⁰ unintelligible, real bread you speak of. It is likewise my opinion, that colours and other sensible qualities are on the

objects. I cannot for my life help thinking that snow is white, and fire hot. You indeed, who by *snow* and *fire* mean certain external, unperceived, unperceiving substances, are in the right to deny whiteness or heat, to be affections inherent in them. But I, who understand by those words the things I see and feel, am obliged to think like other folks. And as I am no sceptic with regard to the nature of things, so neither am I as to their existence. That a thing should be really perceived by my senses, and at the same time not really exist, is to me a plain contradiction ; since I cannot prescind or abstract, even in thought, the existence of a sensible thing from its being perceived. Wood, stones, fire, water, flesh, iron, and the like things, which I name and discourse of, are things that I know. And I should not have known them, but that I perceived them by my senses ; and things perceived by the senses are immediately perceived ; and things immediately perceived are ideas ; and ideas cannot exist without the mind ; their existence therefore consists in being perceived ; when therefore they are actually perceived, there can be no doubt of their existence. Away 10 then with all that scepticism, all those ridiculous philosophical doubts. What a jest is it for a philosopher to question the existence of sensible things, till he hath it proved to him from the veracity of God¹ : or to pretend our knowledge in this point falls short of intuition or demonstration ?² I might as well doubt of my own being, as of the being of those things I actually see and feel.

20

HYLAS. Not so fast, Philonous : you say you cannot conceive how sensible things should exist without the mind. Do you not ?

30 PHILONOUS. I do.

HYLAS. Supposing you were annihilated, cannot you conceive it possible, that things perceptible by sense may still exist ?

PHILONOUS. I can ; but then it must be in another mind. When I deny sensible things an existence out of the mind, I do not mean my mind in particular, but all minds. Now it is plain they have an existence exterior to my mind, since I find them by experience to be independent of it. There is therefore some other mind wherein they exist, during the intervals between the times of

l 13 I know—(A, B) I know ; otherwise I shou'd never have thought of them, or named them.

¹ [Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*, IV ; *Meditationes*, IV ; *Principia*, I v.—Ed.] ² [Locke, *Essay*, IV xi 3.—Ed.]

my perceiving them : as likewise they did before my birth, and would do after my supposed annihilation. And as the same is true, with regard to all other finite created spirits ; it necessarily follows, there is an *omnipresent eternal Mind*, which knows and comprehends all things, and exhibits them to our view in such a manner, and according to such rules as he himself hath ordained, and are by us termed the *Laws of Nature*.

HYLAS. Answer me, Philonous. Are all our ideas perfectly inert beings ? Or have they any agency included in them ? 10

PHILONOUS. They are altogether passive and inert.

HYLAS. And is not God an agent, a being purely active ?

PHILONOUS. I acknowledge it.

HYLAS. No idea therefore can be like unto, or represent the nature of God.

PHILONOUS. It cannot.

HYLAS. Since therefore you have no idea of the mind of God, how can you conceive it possible, that things should exist in his mind ? Or, if you can conceive the mind of God without having an idea of it, why may not I be allowed to conceive 20 the existence of matter, notwithstanding that I have no idea of it ?

PHILONOUS. As to your first question ; I own I have properly no idea, either of God or any other spirit ; for these being active, cannot be represented by things perfectly inert, as our ideas are. I do nevertheless know, that I who am a spirit or thinking substance, exist as certainly, as I know my ideas exist. Farther, I know what I mean by the terms *I* and *myself* ; and I know this immediately, or intuitively, though I do not perceive it as I perceive a triangle, a colour, or a sound. The mind, spirit 30 or soul, is that indivisible unextended thing, which thinks, acts, and perceives. I say *indivisible*, because unextended ; and *unextended*, because extended, figured, moveable things, are ideas ; and that which perceives ideas, which thinks and wills, is plainly it self no idea, nor like an idea. Ideas are things inactive, and perceived : and spirits a sort of beings altogether different from them. I do not therefore say my soul is an idea, or like an idea. However, taking the word *idea* in a large sense, my soul may be said to furnish me with an idea, that is, an image, or likeness of God, though indeed extremely inadequate, 40 For all the notion I have of God, is obtained by reflecting on my own soul heightening its powers, and removing its im-

perfections.¹ I have therefore, though not an inactive idea, yet in my self some sort of an active thinking image of the Deity. And though I perceive Him not by sense, yet I have a notion of Him, or know Him by reflexion and reasoning. My own mind and my own ideas I have an immediate knowledge of; and by the help of these, do mediately apprehend the possibility of the existence of other spirits and ideas. Farther, from my own being, and from the dependency I find in my self and my ideas, I do by an act of reason, necessarily infer the existence
 10 of a God, and of all created things in the mind of God. So much for your first question. For the second: I suppose by this time you can answer it your self. For you neither perceive matter objectively, as you do an inactive being or idea, nor know it, as you do your self by a reflex act: neither do you mediately apprehend it by similitude of the one or the other: nor yet collect it by reasoning from that which you know immediately. All which makes the case of *matter* widely different from that of the *Deity*.

HYLAS.² You say your own soul supplies you with some sort of an
 20 idea or image of God. But at the same time you acknowledge you have, properly speaking, no idea of your own soul. You even affirm that spirits are a sort of beings altogether different from ideas. Consequently that no idea can be like a spirit. We have therefore no idea of any spirit. You admit nevertheless that there is spiritual substance, although you have no idea of it; while you deny there can be such a thing as material substance, because you have no notion or idea of it. Is this fair dealing? To act consistently, you must either admit matter or reject spirit. What say you to this?

PHILONOUS. I say in the first place, that I do not deny the existence of material substance, merely because I have no notion of it, but because the notion of it is inconsistent, or in other words, because it is repugnant that there should be a notion of it. Many things, for ought I know, may exist, whereof neither I nor any other man hath or can have any idea or notion whatsoever. But then those things must be possible, that is, nothing

l 19 You say your own soul . . . between spirit and matter—(four paragraphs in C only).

¹ [Berkeley is here following Locke (*Essay*, II xxiii 33-5), who rejects Descartes' doctrine of the innateness of the idea of God and the consequent priority of the idea of perfection over that of imperfection.—Ed.] ² [On this long passage added in 1734 see above, p. 152.—Ed.]

inconsistent must be included in their definition. I say secondly, that although we believe things to exist which we do not perceive ; yet we may not believe that any particular thing exists, without some reason for such belief : but I have no reason for believing the existence of matter. I have no immediate intuition thereof : neither can I meditately from my sensations, ideas, notions, actions or passions, infer an unthinking, unperceiving, inactive substance, either by probable deduction, or necessary consequence. Whereas the being of my self, that is, my own soul, mind or thinking principle, I evidently know ¹⁰ by reflexion. You will forgive me if I repeat the same things in answer to the same objections. In the very notion or definition of material substance, there is included a manifest repugnance and inconsistency. But this cannot be said of the notion of spirit. That ideas should exist in what doth not perceive, or be produced by what doth not act, is repugnant. But it is no repugnancy to say, that a perceiving thing should be the subject of ideas, or an active thing the cause of them. It is granted we have neither an immediate evidence nor a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of other finite spirits ; but it will not ²⁰ thence follow that such spirits are on a foot with material substances : if to suppose the one be inconsistent, and it be not inconsistent to suppose the other ; if the one can be inferred by no argument, and there is a probability for the other ; if we see signs and effects indicating distinct finite agents like our selves, and see no sign or symptom whatever that leads to a rational belief of matter. I say lastly, that I have a notion of spirit, though I have not, strictly speaking, an idea of it. I do not perceive it as an idea or by means of an idea, but know it by reflexion.

³⁰
HYLAS. Notwithstanding all you have said, to me it seems, that according to your own way of thinking, and in consequence of your own principles, it should follow that you are only a system of floating ideas, without any substance to support them. Words are not to be used without a meaning. And as there is no more meaning in spiritual substance than in material substance, the one is to be exploded as well as the other.

PHILONOUS. How often must I repeat, that I know or am conscious of my own being ; and that I my self am not my ideas, but ⁴⁰ somewhat else, a thinking active principle that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas. I know that I, one

and the same self, perceive both colours and sounds¹ : that a colour cannot perceive a sound, nor a sound a colour : that I am therefore one individual principle, distinct from colour and sound ; and, for the same reason, from all other sensible things and inert ideas. But I am not in like manner conscious either of the existence or essence of matter. On the contrary, I know that nothing inconsistent can exist, and that the existence of matter implies an inconsistency. Farther, I know what I mean, when I affirm that there is a spiritual substance or support of ideas, that is, that a spirit knows and perceives ideas. But I do not know what is meant, when it is said, that an unperceiving substance hath inherent in it and supports either ideas or the archetypes of ideas. There is therefore upon the whole no parity of case between spirit and matter.

HYLAS. I own my self satisfied in this point. But do you in earnest think, the real existence of sensible things consists in their being actually perceived ? If so ; how comes it that all mankind distinguish between them ? Ask the first man you meet, and he shall tell you, *to be perceived* is one thing, and *to exist* is another.

PHILONOUS. I am content, Hylas, to appeal to the common sense of the world for the truth of my notion. Ask the gardener, why he thinks yonder cherry-tree exists in the garden, and he shall tell you, because he sees and feels it ; in a word, because he perceives it by his senses. Ask him, why he thinks an orange-tree not to be there, and he shall tell you, because he does not perceive it. What he perceives by sense, that he terms a real being, and saith it *is*, or *exists* ; but that which is not perceptible, the same, he saith, hath no being.

HYLAS. Yes, Philonous, I grant the existence of a sensible thing consists in being perceptible, but not in being actually perceived.

PHILONOUS. And what is perceptible but an idea ? And can an idea exist without being actually perceived ? These are points long since agreed between us.

HYLAS. But be your opinion never so true, yet surely you will not deny it is shocking, and contrary to the common sense of men.

¹ [There may be a reminiscence here of Aristotle's *De Anima*, III ii 425b12 (*ἐπεὶ δ' αἰσθανόμεθα ὅτι ὅραμεν καὶ ἀκούσμεν*). Hume, in his reduction of the mind to a 'bundle or collection of different perceptions' (*Treatise of Human Nature*, I, vi) does not seem to consider Berkeley's point here and in *Principles*, Sect. 2.—Ed.]

Ask the fellow, whether yonder tree hath an existence out of his mind : what answer think you he would make ?

PHILONOUS. The same that I should my self, to wit, that it doth exist out of his mind. But then to a Christian it cannot surely be shocking to say, the real tree existing without *his* mind is truly known and comprehended by (that is, *exists in*) the infinite mind of God. Probably he may not at first glance be aware of the direct and immediate proof there is of this, inasmuch as the very being of a tree, or any other sensible thing, implies a mind wherein it is. But the point it self he cannot deny. The 10 question between the materialists and me is not, whether things have a real existence out of the mind of this or that person, but whether they have an absolute existence, distinct from being perceived by God, and exterior to all minds. This indeed some heathens and philosophers have affirmed, but whoever entertains notions of the Deity suitable to the Holy Scriptures, will be of another opinion.

HYLAS. But according to your notions, what difference is there between real things, and chimeras formed by the imagination, or the visions of a dream, since they are all equally in the mind ? 20

PHILONOUS. The ideas formed by the imagination are faint and indistinct ; they have besides an entire dependence on the will. But the ideas perceived by sense, that is, real things, are more vivid and clear, and being imprinted on the mind by a spirit distinct from us, have not a like dependence on our will. There is therefore no danger of confounding these with the foregoing : and there is as little of confounding them with the visions of a dream, which are dim, irregular, and confused. And though they should happen to be never so lively and natural, yet by their not being connected, and of a piece with the preceding 30 and subsequent transactions of our lives, they might easily be distinguished from realities. In short, by whatever method you distinguish *things* from *chimeras* on your own scheme, the same, it is evident, will hold also upon mine. For it must be, I presume, by some perceived difference, and I am not for depriving you of any one thing that you perceive.

HYLAS. But still, Philonus, you hold, there is nothing in the world but spirits and ideas. And this, you must needs acknowledge, sounds very oddly.

PHILONOUS. I own the word *idea*, not being commonly used for 40 *thing*, sounds something out of the way. My reason for using it was, because a necessary relation to the mind is understood to

be implied by that term ; and it is now commonly used by philosophers, to denote the immediate objects of the understanding. But however oddly the proposition may sound in words, yet it includes nothing so very strange or shocking in its sense, which in effect amounts to no more than this, to wit, that there are only things perceiving, and things perceived ; or that every unthinking being is necessarily, and from the very nature of its existence, perceived by some mind ; if not by any finite created mind, yet certainly by the infinite mind of God, in

- o whom *we live, and move, and have our being*. Is this as strange as to say, the sensible qualities are not on the objects : or, that we cannot be sure of the existence of things, or know any thing of their real natures, though we both see and feel them, and perceive them by all our senses ?

HYLAS. And in consequence of this, must we not think there are no such things as physical or corporeal causes ; but that a spirit is the immediate cause of all the phenomena in Nature ? Can there be any thing more extravagant than this ?

PHILONOUS. Yes, it is infinitely more extravagant to say, a thing

- o which is inert, operates on the mind, and which is unperceiving, is the cause of our perceptions. Besides, that which to you, I know not for what reason, seems so extravagant, is no more than the Holy Scriptures assert in a hundred places. In them God is represented as the sole and immediate Author of all those effects, which some heathens and philosophers are wont to ascribe to Nature, matter, fate, or the like unthinking principle. This is so much the constant language of Scripture, that it were needless to confirm it by citations.

HYLAS. You are not aware, Philonous, that in making God the

- 30 immediate author of all the motions in Nature, you make him the author of murder, sacrilege, adultery, and the like heinous sins.¹

PHILONOUS. In answer to that, I observe first, that the imputation of guilt is the same, whether a person commits an action with or without an instrument. In case therefore you suppose God to act by the mediation of an instrument, or occasion, called *matter*, you as truly make Him the author of sin as I, who think Him the immediate agent in all those operations vulgarly ascribed to Nature. I farther observe, that sin or moral turpi-

l 21 perceptions—(A, B) perceptions, without any regard either to consistency, or the old known axiom : Nothing can give to another that which it hath not itself.

¹ [See below, pp. 273 and 281—Ed.]

tude doth not consist in the outward physical action or motion, but in the internal deviation of the will from the laws of reason and religion. This is plain, in that the killing an enemy in a battle, or putting a criminal legally to death, is not thought sinful, though the outward act be the very same with that in the case of murder. Since therefore sin doth not consist in the physical action, the making God an immediate cause of all such actions, is not making him the author of sin. Lastly, I have no where said that God is the only agent who produces all the motions in bodies. It is true, I have denied there are any other ¹⁰ agents beside spirits : but this is very consistent with allowing to thinking rational beings, in the production of motions, the use of limited powers, ultimately indeed derivcd from God, but immediately under the direction of their own wills, which is sufficient to entitle them to all the guilt of their actions.

HYLAS. But the denying matter, Philonous, or corporeal substance; there is the point. You can never persuade me that this is not repugnant to the universal sense of mankind. Were our dispute to be determined by most voices, I am confident you would give up the point, without gathering the votes. ²⁰

PHILONOUS. I wish both our opinions were fairly stated and submitted to the judgment of men who had plain common sense, without the prejudices of a learned education. Let me be represented as one who trusts his senses, who thinks he knows the things he sees and feels, and entertains no doubts, of their existence ; and you fairly set forth with all your doubts, your paradoxes, and your scepticism about you, and I shall willingly acquiesce in the determination of any indifferent person. That there is no substance wherein ideas can exist beside spirit, is to me evident. And that the objects immediately perceived are ³⁰ ideas, is on all hands agreed. And that sensible qualities are objects immediately perceived, no one can deny. It is therefore evident there can be no *substratum* of those qualities but spirit, in which they exist, not by way of mode or property, but as a thing perceived in that which perceives it. I deny therefore that there is any unthinking *substratum* of the objects of sense, and in that acceptation that there is any material substance. But if by *material substance* is meant only sensible body, that which is seen and felt (and the unphilosophical part of the world, I dare say, mean no more) then I am more certain of matter's ⁴⁰ existence than you, or any other philosopher, pretend to be. If there be any thing which makes the generality of mankind

averse from the notions I espouse, it is a misapprehension that I deny the reality of sensible things : but as it is you who are guilty of that and not I, it follows that in truth their aversion is against your notions, and not mine. I do therefore assert that I am as certain as of my own being, that there are bodies or corporeal substances (meaning the things I perceive by my senses), and that granting this, the bulk of mankind will take no thought about, nor think themselves at all concerned in the fate of those unknown natures, and philosophical quiddities,
10 which some men are so fond of.

HYLAS. What say you to this ? Since, according to you, men judge of the reality of things by their senses, how can a man be mistaken in thinking the moon a plain lucid surface, about a foot in diameter ; or a square tower, seen at a distance, round ; or an oar, with one end in the water, crooked ?

PHILONOUS. He is not mistaken with regard to the ideas he actually perceives ; but in the inferences he makes from his present perceptions. Thus in the case of the oar, what he immediately perceives by sight is certainly crooked ; and so far he is in the right. But if he thence conclude, that upon taking the oar out of the water he shall perceive the same crookedness ; or that it would affect his touch, as crooked things are wont to do : in that he is mistaken. In like manner, if he shall conclude from what he perceives in one station, that in case he advances toward the moon or tower, he should still be affected with the like ideas, he is mistaken. But his mistake lies not in what he perceives immediately and at present (it being a manifest contradiction to suppose he should err in respect of that) but in the wrong judgment he makes concerning the ideas he apprehends to be connected with those immediately perceived : or concerning the ideas that, from what he perceives at present, he imagines would be perceived in other circumstances. The case is the same with regard to the Copernican system.¹ We do not here perceive any motion of the earth : but it were erroneous thence to conclude, that in case we were placed at as great a distance from that, as we are now from the other planets, we should not then perceive its motion.

HYLAS. I understand you ; and must needs own you say things
40 plausible enough : but give me leave to put you in mind of

¹ *25 advances—(A, B) advanced.*

¹ [See *Principles*, Sect. 58.—Ed.]

one thing. Pray, Philonous, were you not formerly as positive that matter existed, as you are now that it does not ?

PHILONOUS. I was. But here lies the difference. Before, my positiveness was founded without examination, upon prejudice ; but now, after inquiry, upon evidence.

HYLAS. After all, it seems our dispute is rather about words than things. We agree in the thing, but differ in the name. That we are affected with ideas from without is evident ; and it is no less evident, that there must be (I will not say archetypes,¹ but) powers without the mind, corresponding to those ideas. ¹⁰ And as these powers cannot subsist by themselves, there is some subject of them necessarily to be admitted, which I call *matter*, and you call *spirit*. This is all the difference.

PHILONOUS. Pray, Hylas, is that powerful being, or subject of powers, extended ?

HYLAS. It hath not extension ; but it hath the power to raise in you the idea of extension.

PHILONOUS. It is therefore itself unextended.

HYLAS. I grant it.

PHILONOUS. Is it not also active ?

HYLAS. Without doubt : otherwise, how could we attribute powers to it ?

PHILONOUS. Now let me ask you two questions : *first*, whether it be agreeable to the usage either of philosophers or others, to give the name *matter* to an unextended active being ? And *secondly*, whether it be not ridiculously absurd to misapply names contrary to the common use of language ?

HYLAS. Well then, let it not be called matter, since you will have it so, but some *third nature* distinct from matter and spirit. For, what reason is there why you should call it spirit ? does not the ²⁰ notion of spirit imply, that it is thinking as well as active and unextended ?

PHILONOUS. My reason is this : because I have a mind to have some notion or meaning in what I say ; but I have no notion of any action distinct from volition, neither can I conceive volition to be any where but in a spirit : therefore when I speak of an active being, I am obliged to mean a spirit. Beside, what can be plainer than that a thing which hath no ideas in itself, cannot impart them to me ; and if it hath ideas, surely it must be a spirit. To make you comprehend the point still more ⁴⁰

¹ [On archetypes *cp.* pp. 248 and 254 ; also p. 268 and my note on *Principles*, Sect. 87.—Ed.]

clearly if it be possible : I ascert as well as you, that since we are affected from without, we must allow powers to be without in a being distinct from ourselves. So far we are agreed. But then we differ as to the kind of this powerful being. I will have it to be spirit, you matter, or I know not what (I may add too, you know not what) third nature. Thus I prove it to be spirit. From the effects I see produced, I conclude there are actions ; and because actions, volitions ; and because there are volitions, there must be a will. Again, the things I 10 perceive must have an existence, they or their archetypes, out of my mind : but being ideas, neither they nor their archetypes can exist otherwise than in an understanding : there is therefore an understanding. But will and understanding constitute in the strictest sense a mind or spirit. The powerful cause therefore of my ideas, is in strict propriety of speech a *spirit*.

HYLAS. And now I warrant you think you have made the point very clear, little suspecting that what you advance leads directly to a contradiction. Is it not an absurdity to imagine any 20 imperfection in God ?

PHILONOUS. Without doubt.

HYLAS. To suffer pain is an imperfection.

PHILONOUS. It is.

HYLAS. Are we not sometimes affected with pain and uneasiness by some other being ?

PHILONOUS. We are.

HYLAS. And have you not said that being is a spirit, and is not that spirit God ?

PHILONOUS. I grant it.

30 HYLAS. But you have asserted, that whatever ideas we perceive from without, are in the mind which affects us. The ideas therefore of pain and uneasiness are in God ; or in other words, God suffers pain : that is to say, there is an imperfection in the Divine Nature, which you acknowledged was absurd. So you are caught in a plain contradiction.

PHILONOUS. That God knows or understands all things, and that He knows among other things what pain is, even every sort of painful sensation, and what it is for His creatures to suffer pain, I make no question. But that God, though He knows 40 and sometimes causes painful sensations in us, can Himself suffer pain, I positively deny. We who are limited and dependent spirits, are liable to impressions of sense, the effects of an

external agent, which being produced against our wills, are sometimes painful and uneasy. But God, whom no external being can affect, who perceives nothing by sense as we do, whose will is absolute and independent, causing all things, and liable to be thwarted or resisted by nothing ; it is evident, such a being as this can suffer nothing, nor be affected with any painful sensation, or indeed any sensation at all. We are chained to a body, that is to say, our perceptions are connected with corporeal motions. By the Law of our Nature we are affected upon every alteration in the nervous parts of our sensible body : 10 which sensible body rightly considered, is nothing but a complexion of such qualities or ideas, as have no existence distinct from being perceived by a mind : so that this connexion of sensations with corporal motions, means no more than a correspondence in the order of Nature between two sets of ideas, or things immediately perceptible. But God is a pure spirit, disengaged from all such sympathy or natural ties. No corporeal motions are attended with the sensations of pain or pleasure in his mind. To know every thing knowable is certainly a perfection ; but to endure, or suffer, or feel any thing by 20 sense, is an imperfection. The former, I say, agrees to God, but not the latter. God knows or hath ideas ; but His ideas are not convey'd to Him by sense, as ours are. Your not distinguishing where there is so manifest a difference, makes you fancy you see an absurdity where there is none.

HYLAS. But all this while you have not considered, that the quantity of matter hath been demonstrated to be proportional to the gravity of bodies. And what can withstand demonstration ?

PHILONOUS. Let me see how you demonstrate that point.

HYLAS. I lay it down for a principle, that the moments or quantities 30 of motion in bodies, are in a direct compounded reason of the velocities and quantities of matter contained in them. Hence, where the velocities are equal, it follows, the moments are directly as the quantity of matter in each. But it is found by experience, that all bodies (bating the small inequalities, arising from the resistance of the air) descend with an equal velocity ; the motion therefore of descending bodies, and consequently their gravity, which is the cause or principle of that motion, is proportional to the quantity of matter : which was to be demonstrated. 40

PHILONOUS. You lay it down as a self-evident principle, that the quantity of motion in any body, is proportional to the velocity

and *matter* taken together : and this is made use of to prove a proposition, from whence the existence of *matter* is inferred. Pray is not this arguing in a circle ?

HYLAS. In the premise I only mean, that the motion is proportional to the velocity, jointly with the extension and solidity.

PHILONOUS. But allowing this to be true, yet it will not thence follow, that gravity is proportional to *matter*, in your philosophic sense of the word ; except you take it for granted, that unknown *substratum*, or whatever else you call it, is proportional to those

10 sensible qualities ; which to suppose, is plainly begging the question. That there is magnitude and solidity, or resistance, perceived by sense, I readily grant ; as likewise that gravity may be proportional to those qualities, I will not dispute. But that either these qualities as perceived by us, or the powers producing them do exist in a *material substratum* ; this is what I deny, and you indeed affirm, but notwithstanding your demonstration, have not yet proved.

HYLAS. I shall insist no longer on that point. Do you think however, you shall persuade me the natural philosophers have 20 been dreaming all this while ; pray what becomes of all their hypotheses and explications of the phenomena, which suppose the existence of matter ?

PHILONOUS. What mean you, Hylas, by the phenomena ?

HYLAS. I mean the appcarances which I perceive by my senses.

PHILONOUS. And the appearances perceived by sense, are they not ideas ?

HYLAS. I have told you so a hundred times.

PHILONOUS. Therefore, to explain the phenomena, is to shew how we come to be affected with ideas, in that manner and order 30 wherein they are imprinted on our senses. Is it not ?

HYLAS. It is.

PHILONOUS. Now if you can prove, that any philosopher hath explained the production of any one idea in our minds by the help of *matter*, I shall for ever acquiesce, and look on all that hath been said against it as nothing : but if you cannot, it is in vain to urge the explication of phenomena. That a being endowed with knowledge and will, should produce or exhibit ideas, is easily understood. But that a being which is utterly destitute of these faculties should be able to produce ideas, or in any sort 40 to affect an intelligence, this I can never understand. This I say, though we had some positive conception of matter, though

l 29 order—(A, B) series.

we knew its qualities, and could comprehend its existence, would yet be so far from explaining things, that it is it self the most inexplicable thing in the world. And yet for all this, it will not follow, that philosophers have been doing nothing ; for by observing and reasoning upon the connexion of ideas, they discover the laws and methods of Nature, which is a part of knowledge both useful and entertaining.

HYLAS. After all, can it be supposed God would deceive all mankind ? Do you imagine, he would have induced the whole world to believe the being of matter, if there was no such ¹⁰ thing ?

PHILONOUS. That every epidemical opinion arising from prejudice, or passion, or thoughtlessness, may be imputed to God, as the Author of it, I believe you will not affirm. Whatsoever opinion we fathcr on him, it must be either because he has discovered it to us by supernatural revelation, or because it is so evident to our natural faculties, which were framed and given us by God, that it is impossible we should withhold our assent from it. But where is the revelation ? or where is the evidence that extorts the belief of matter ? Nay, how does it appear, that ²⁰ matter taken for something distinct from what we perceive by our senses, is thought to exist by all mankind, or indeed by any except a few philosophers, who do not know what they would be at ? Your question supposes these points are clear ; and when you have cleared them, I shall think my self obliged to give you another answer. In the mean time let it suffice that I tell you, I do not suppose God has deceived mankind at all.

HYLAS. But the novelty, Philonous, the novelty ! There lies the danger. New notions should always be discountenanced ; they unsettle men's minds, and no body knows where they will ³⁰ end.

PHILONOUS. Why the rejecting a notion that hath no foundation either in sense or in reason, or in divine authority, should be thought to unsettle the belief of such opinions as are grounded on all or any of thcse, I cannot imagine. That innovations in government and religion, are dangerous, and ought to be discountenanced, I freely own. But is there the like reason why they should bc discouraged in philosophy ? The making any thing known which was unknown before, is an innovation in knowledge : and if all such innovations had been forbidden, ⁴⁰

13 And yet for all this . . . doing nothing—(A, B) And for all this . . . doing nothing neither. 133 in sense or in reason—(A, B) in sense, in reason.

men would¹ have made a notable progress in the arts and sciences. But it is none of my business to plead for novelties and paradoxes. That the qualities we perceive, are not on the objects : that we must not believe our senses : that we know nothing of the real nature of things, and can never be assured even of their existence : that real colours and sounds are nothing but certain unknown figures and motions : that motions are in themselves neither swift nor slow : that there are in bodies absolute extnsions, without any particular magnitude or figure : 10 that a thing stupid, thoughtless and inactive, operates on a spirit : that the least particle of a body, contains innumerable extended parts. These are the novelties, these are the strange notions which shock the genuine uncorrupted judgment of all mankind ; and being once admitted, embarrass the mind with endless doubts and difficulties. And it is against these and the like innovations, I endeavour to vindicate common sense. It is true, in doing this, I may perhaps be obliged to use some ambages, and ways of speech not common. But if my notions are once thoroughly understood, that which is most singular in them, will in effect be found to amount to no more than this : 20 that it is absolutely impossible, and a plain contradiction to suppose, any unthinking being should exist without being perceived by a mind. And if this notion be singular, it is a shame it should be so at this time of day, and in a Christian country.

HYLAS. As for the difficulties other opinions may be liable to, those are out of the question. It is your business to defend your own opinion. Can any thing be plainer, than that you are for changing all things into ideas ? You, I say, who are not ashamed to charge me with *scepticism*. This is so plain, there is no denying it.

30 PHILONOUS. You mistake me. I am not for changing things into ideas, but rather ideas into things ; since those immediate objects of perception, which according to you, are only appearances of things, I take to be the real things themselves.

HYLAS. Things ! you may pretend what you please ; but it is certain, you leave us nothing but the empty forms of things, the outside only which strikes the senses.

PHILONOUS. What you call the empty forms and outside of things, seems to me the very things themselves. Nor are they empty or incomplete otherwise, than upon your supposition, that matter

138 seems—(A, B) seem.

¹ [A 'not' seems to have been inadvertently omitted, in all three editions, after 'would.'—Ed.]

is an essential part of all corporeal things. We both therefore agree in this, that we perceive only sensible forms : but herein we differ, you will have them to be empty appearances, I real beings. In short you do not trust your senses, I do.

HYLAS. You say you believe your senses ; and seem to applaud your self that in this you agree with the vulgar. According to you therefore, the true nature of a thing is discovered by the senses. If so, whence comes that disagreement ? Why is not the same figure, and other sensible qualities, perceived all manner of ways ? and why should we use a microscope, the better to discover the true nature of a body, if it were discoverable to the naked eye ?

PHILONOUS. Strictly speaking, Hylas, we do not see the same object that we feel¹ ; neither is the same object perceived by the microscope, which was by the naked eye. But in case every variation was thought sufficient to constitute a new kind or individual, the endless number or confusion of names would render language impracticable. Therefore to avoid this as well as other inconveniences which are obvious upon a little thought, men combine together several ideas, apprehended by divers ²⁰ senses, or by the same sense at different times, or in different circumstances, but observed however to have some connexion in Nature, either with respect to co-existence or succession ; all which they refer to one name, and consider as one thing. Hence it follows that when I examine by my other senses a thing I have seen, it is not in order to understand better the same object which I had perceived by sight, the object of one sense not being perceived by the other senses. And when I look through a microscope, it is not that I may perceive more clearly what I perceived already with my bare eyes, the object perceived by ³⁰ the glass being quite different from the former. But in both cases my aim is only to know what ideas are connected together ; and the more a man knows of the connexion of ideas, the more he is said to know of the nature of things. What therefore if our ideas are variable ; what if our senses are not in all circumstances affected with the same appearances ? It will not thence follow, they are not to be trusted, or that they are inconsistent either with themselves or any thing else, except it be with your preconceived notion of (I know not what) one single, unchanged, ⁴⁰ unperceivable, real nature, marked by each name : which prejudice seems to have taken its rise from not rightly under-

¹ [See *Essay on Vision*, Sect. 49.—Ed.]

standing the common language of men speaking of several distinct ideas, as united into one thing by the mind. And indeed there is cause to suspect several erroneous concicts of the philosophcrs are owing to the same original : while they began to build their schemes, not so much on notions as words, which were framed by the vulgar, merely for conveniency and dispatch in the common actions of life, without any regard to speculation.

HYLAS. Methinks I apprehend your meaning.

10 PHILONOUS. It is your opinion, the ideas we perceive by our senses are not real things, but images, or copies of them. Our knowledge therefore is no farther real, than as our ideas are the true representations of those originals. But as these supposed originals are in themselves unknown, it is impossible to know how far our ideas resemble them ; or whether they resemble them at all. We cannot therefore be sure we have any real knowledge. Farther, as our ideas are perpetually varied, without any change in the supposed real things, it necessarily follows they cannot all be true copies of them : or if some are, and

20 others are not, it is impossible to distinguish the former from the latter. And this plunges us yet deeper in uncertainty. Again, when we consider the point, we cannot conceive how any idea, or any thing like an idea, should have an absolute existence out of a mind : nor consequently, according to you, how there should be any real thing in Nature. The result of all which is, that we are thrown into the most hopeless and abandoned *scepticism*. Now give me leave to ask you, *first*, whether your referring ideas to certain absolutely existing unperceived substances, as their originals, be not the source of all this *scepticism* ?

30 *Secondly*, whether you are informed, either by sense or reason, of the existence of those unknown originals ? And in case you are not, whether it be not absurd to suppose them ? *Thirdly*, whether, upon inquiry, you find there is any thing distinctly conceived or meant by the *absolute or external existence of unperceiving substances* ? *Lastly*, whether the premises considered, it be not the wisest way to follow Nature, trust your senses, and laying aside all anxious thought about unknown natures or substances, admit with the vulgar those for real things, which are perceived by the senses ?

40 HYLAS. For the present, I have no inclination to the answering part. I would much rather see how you can get over what follows. Pray are not the objects perceived by the senses of one,

likewise perceptible to others present? If there were an hundred more here, they would all see the garden, the trees, and flowers as I see them. But they are not in the same manner affected with the ideas I frame in my imagination. Does not this make a difference between the former sort of objects and the latter?

PHILONOUS. I grant it does. Nor have I ever denied a difference between the objects of sense and those of imagination. But what would you infer from thence? You cannot say that sensible objects exist unperceived, because they are perceived by many.

HYLAS. I own, I can make nothing of that objection: but it hath led me into another. Is it not your opinion that by our senses we perceive only the ideas existing in our minds?

PHILONOUS. It is.

HYLAS. But the same idea which is in my mind, cannot be in yours, or in any other mind. Doth it not therefore follow from your principles, that no two can see the same thing? And is not this highly absurd?

PHILONOUS. If the term *same* be taken in the vulgar acceptation, it is certain (and not at all repugnant to the principles I maintain) that different persons may perceive the same thing; or the same thing or idea exist in different minds. Words are of arbitrary imposition; and since men are used to apply the word *same* where no distinction or variety is perceived, and I do not pretend to alter their perceptions, it follows, that as men have said before, *several saw the same thing*, so they may upon like occasions still continue to use the same phrase, without any deviation either from propriety of language, or the truth of things. But if the term *same* be used in the acceptation of philosophers, who pretend to an abstracted notion of identity, then, according to their sundry definitions of this notion (for it is not yet agreed wherein that philosophic identity consists), it may or may not be possible for divers persons to perceive the same thing. But whether philosophers shall think fit to call a thing the *same* or no, is, I conceive, of small importance. Let us suppose several men together, all endued with the same faculties, and consequently affected in like sort by their senses, and who had yet never known the use of language; they would without question agree in their perceptions. Though perhaps, when they came to the use of speech, some regarding the uniformness of what was perceived, might call it the *same* thing: others especially

l 1 to others—(A, B) to all others.

regarding the diversity of persons who perccived, might choose the denomination of different things. But who sees not that all the dispute is about a word ? to wit, whether what is perceived by different persons, may yet have the term *same* applied to it ? Or suppose a house, whose walls or outward shell remaining unaltercd, the chambers are all pulled down, and new ones built in their place ; and that you should call this the *same*, and I should say it was not the *same* house : would we not for all this perfectly agree in our thoughts of the house, considercd in it self ? and would not all the difference consist in a sound ? If you should say, we differed in our notions ; for that you superadded to your idea of the house the simple abstracted idea of identity, whereas I did not ; I would tell you I know not what you mean by that *abstracted idea of identity* ; and should desire you to look into your own thoughts, and be sure you understood your self—— Why so silent, Hylas ? Are you not yet satisfied, men may dispute about identity and diversity, without any real difference in thcir thoughts and opinions, abstracted from names ? Take this farther reflexion with you : o that whether matter be allowed to exist or no, the case is exactly the same as to the point in hand. For the materialists themselves acknowledge what we immediately perceive by our senses, to be our own ideas. Your difficulty therefore, that no two see the same thing, makes equally against the materialists and me.

HYLAS. But they suppose an external archetype, to which referring their several ideas, they may truly be said to perccive the same thing.

PHILONOUS. And (not to mention your having discarded those

o archetypes) so may you suppose an external archetype on my principles ; *external*, I mean, to your own mind ; though indeed it must be supposed to exist in that mind which comprehends all things ; but then this serves all the ends of identity, as well as if it existed out of a mind. And I am sure you your self will not say, it is less intelligible.

HYLAS. You have indeed clearly satisfied me, either that thcre is no difficulty at bottom in this point ; or if there be, that it makes equally against both opinions.

PHILONOUS. But that which makes equally against two contradictory opinions, can be a proof against neither.

HYLAS. I acknowledge it. But after all, Philonous, when I consider

the substance of what you advance against *scepticism*, it amounts to no more than this. We are sure that we really see, hear, feel ; in a word, that we are affected with sensible impressions.

PHILONOUS. And how are we concerned any farther ? I see this *cherry*, I feel it, I taste it : and I am sure *nothing* cannot be seen, or felt, or tasted : it is therefore *real*. Take away the sensations of softness, moisture, redness, tartness, and you take away the *cherry*. Since it is not a being distinct from sensations ; a *cherry*, I say, is nothing but a congeries of sensible impressions, or ideas perceived by various senses : which ideas are united ¹⁰ into one thing (or have one name given them) by the mind ; because they are observed to attend each other. Thus when the palate is affected with such a particular taste, the sight is affected with a red colour, the touch with roundness, softness, &c. Hence, when I see, and feel, and taste, in sundry certain manners, I am sure the *cherry* exists, or is real ; its reality being in my opinion nothing abstracted from those sensations. But if by the word *cherry* you mean an unknown nature distinct from all those sensible qualities, and by its existence something distinct from its being perceived ; then indeed I own, neither you ²⁰ nor I, nor any one else can be sure it exists.

HYLAS. But what would you say, Philonous, if I should bring the very same reasons against the existence of sensible things in a mind, which you have offered against their existing in a material *substratum* ?

PHILONOUS. When I see your reasons, you shall hear what I have to say to them.

HYLAS. Is the mind extended or unextended ?

PHILONOUS. Unextended, without doubt.

HYLAS. Do you say the things you perceive are in your mind ? ³⁰

PHILONOUS. They are.

HYLAS. Again, have I not heard you speak of sensible impressions ?

PHILONOUS. I believe you may.

HYLAS. Explain to me now, O Philonous ! how it is possible there should be room for all those trees and houses to exist in your mind. Can extended things be contained in that which is unextended ? Or are we to imagine impressions made on a thing void of all solidity ? You cannot say objects are in your mind, as books in your study : or that things are imprinted on it, as the figure of a seal upon wax. In what sense therefore are ⁴⁰

l 8 sensations—(A, B) those sensations. l 15 sundry—(A, B) such sundry. l 30 Do you say—(A, B) Do you not say.

(to 0)

we to understand those expressions ? Explain me this if you can : and I shall then be able to answer all those queries you formerly put to me about my *substratum*.

PHILONOUS. Look you, Hylas, when I speak of objects as existing in the mind or imprinted on the senses ; I would not be understood in the gross literal sense, as when bodies are said to exist in a place, or a seal to make an impression upon wax. My meaning is only that the mind comprehends or perceives them ; and that it is affected from without, or by some being distinct from itself. This is my explication of your difficulty ; and how it can serve to make your tenet of an unperceiving material *substratum* intelligible, I would fain know.

HYLAS. Nay, if that be all, I confess I do not see what use can be made of it. But are you not guilty of some abuse of language in this ?

PHILONOUS. None at all : it is no more than common custom, which you know is the rule of language, hath authorized : nothing being more usual, than for philosophers to speak of the immediate objects of the understanding as things existing in the mind. Nor is there any thing in this, but what is conformable to the general analogy of language ; most part of the mental operations being signified by words borrowed from sensible things ; as is plain in the terms *comprehend*, *reflect*, *discourse*, &c. which being applied to the mind, must not be taken in their gross original sense.

HYLAS. You have, I own, satisfied me in this point : but there still remains one great difficulty, which I know not how you will get over. And indeed it is of such importance, that if you could solve all others, without being able to find a solution for this,

30 you must never expect to make me a proselyte to your principles.

PHILONOUS. Let me know this mighty difficulty.

HYLAS. The Scripture account of the Creation, is what appears to me utterly irreconcileable with your notions.¹ Moses tells us of a Creation : a Creation of what ? of ideas ? No certainly, but of things, of real things, solid corporeal substances. Bring your principles to agree with this, and I shall perhaps agree with you.

PHILONOUS. Moses mentions the sun, moon, and stars, earth and sea, plants and animals : that all these do really exist, and

40 were in the beginning created by God, I make no question.

^l 36 *perhaps agree*—(A, B) *the sooner agree*.

¹ [See my note on *Principles*, Sect. 84.—Ed.]

If by *ideas*, you mean fictions and fancies of the mind, then these are no ideas. If by *ideas*, you mean immediate objects of the understanding, or sensible things which cannot exist unperceived, or out of a mind, then these things are ideas. But whether you do, or do not call them *ideas*, it matters little. The difference is only about a name. And whether that name be retained or rejected, the sense, the truth and reality of things continues the same. In common talk, the objects of our senses are not termed *ideas* but *things*. Call them so still: provided you do not attribute to them any absolute external existence, 10 and I shall never quarrel with you for a word. The Creation therefore I allow to have been a creation of things, of *real* things. Neither is this in the least inconsistent with my principles, as is evident from what I have now said; and would have been evident to you without this, if you had not forgotten what had been so often said before. But as for solid corporeal substances, I desire you to shew where Moses makes any mention of them; and if they should be mentioned by him, or any other inspired writer, it would still be incumbent on you to shew those words were not taken in the vulgar acceptation, for things falling under 20 our senses, but in the philosophic acceptation, for matter, or an unknown quiddity, with an absolute existence. When you have proved these points, then (and not till then) may you bring the authority of Moses into our dispute.

HYLAS. It is in vain to dispute about a point so clear. I am content to refer it to your own conscience. Are you not satisfied there is some peculiar repugnancy between the Mosaic account of the Creation, and your notions?

PHILONOUS. If all possible sense, which can be put on the first chapter of *Genesis*, may be concived as consistently with my 30 principles as any other, then it has no peculiar repugnancy with them. But there is no sense you may not as well conceive, believing as I do. Since, beside spirits, all you conceive are ideas; and the existence of these I do not deny. Neither do you pretend they exist without the mind.

HYLAS. Pray let me see any sense you can understand it in.

PHILONOUS. Why, I imagine that if I had been present at the Creation, I should have seen things produced into being; that is, become perceptible, in the order described by the sacred historian. I ever before believed the Mosaic account of the 40 Creation, and now find no alteration in my manner of believing it. When things are said to begin or end their existence, we

do not mean this with regard to God, but His creatures. All objects are eternally known by God, or which is the same thing, have an eternal existence in his mind : but when things before imperceptible to creatures, are by a decree of God, made perceptible to them ; then are they said to begin a relative existence, with respect to created minds. Upon reading therefore the Mosaic account of the Creation, I understand that the several parts of the world became gradually perceptible to finite spirits, endowed with proper faculties ; so that whoever such were
 10 present, they were in truth perceived by them. This is the literal obvious sense suggested to me, by the words of the Holy Scripture : in which is included no mention or no thought, either of *substratum*, instrument, occasion, or absolute existence. And upon inquiry, I doubt not, it will be found, that most plain honest men, who believe the Creation, never think of those things any more than I. What metaphysical sense you may understand it in, you only can tell.

HYLAS. But, Philonous, you do not seem to be aware, that you allow created things in the beginning, only a relative, and
 20 consequently hypothetical being : that is to say, upon supposition there were men to perceive them, without which they have no actuality of absolute existence, wherein Creation might terminate. Is it not therefore according to you plainly impossible, the Creation of any inanimate creatures should precede that of man ? And is not this directly contrary to the Mosaic account ?

PHILONOUS. In answer to that I say, *first*, created beings might begin to exist in the mind of other created intelligences, beside men. You will not therefore be able to prove any contradiction
 30 between Moses and my notions, unless you first shew, there was no other order of finite created spirits in being before man. I say farther, in case we conceive the Creation, as we should at this time a parcel of plants or vegetables of all sorts, produced by an invisible power, in a desert where no body was present : that this way of explaining or conceiving it, is consistent with my principles, since they deprive you of nothing, either sensible or imaginable : that it exactly suits with the common, natural, undebauched notions of mankind : That it manifests the dependence of all things on God ; and consequently hath all
 40 the good effect or influence, which it is possible that important article of our faith should have in making men humble, thankful, and resigned to their Creator. I say moreover, that in this naked

conception of things, divested of words, there will not be found any notion of what you call the *actuality of absolute existence*. You may indeed raise a dust with those terms, and so lengthen our dispute to no purpose. But I entreat you calmly to look into your own thoughts, and then tell me if they are not an useless and unintelligible jargon.

HYLAS. I own, I have no very clear notion annexed to them. But what say you to this? Do you not make the existence of sensible things consist in their being in a mind? And were not all things eternally in the mind of God? Did they not therefore exist 10 from all eternity, according to you? And how could that which was eternal, be created in time? Can any thing be clearer or better connected than this?

PHILONOUS. And are not you too of opinion, that God knew all things from eternity?

HYLAS. I am.

PHILONOUS. Consequently they always had a being in the Divine Intellect.

HYLAS. This I acknowledge.

PHILONOUS. By your own confession therefore, nothing is new, or 20 begins to be, in respect of the mind of God. So we are agreed in that point.

HYLAS. What shall we make then of the Creation?

PHILONOUS. May we not understand it to have been entirely in respect of finite spirits; so that things, with regard to us, may properly be said to begin their existence, or be created, when God decreed they should become perceptible to intelligent creatures, in that order and manner which he then established, and we now call the laws of Nature? You may call this a *relative*, or *hypothetical existence* if you please. But so long as it 30 supplies us with the most natural, obvious, and literal sense of the Mosaic history of the Creation; so long as it answers all the religious ends of that great article; in a word, so long as you can assign no other sense or meaning in its stead; why should we reject this? Is it to comply with a ridiculous sceptical humour of making every thing nonsense and unintelligible? I am sure you cannot say, it is for the glory of God. For allowing it to be a thing possible and conceivable, that the corporeal world should have an absolute subsistence extrinsical to the mind of God, as well as to the minds of all created spirits: 40 yet how could this set forth either the immensity or omniscience of the Deity, or the necessary and immediate dependence of all

things on him? Nay, would it not rather seem to derogate from those attributes?

HYLAS. Well, but as to this decree of God's, for making things perceptible: what say you, Philonous, is it not plain, God did either execute that decree from all eternity, or at some certain time began to will what he had not actually willed before, but only designed to will. If the former, then there could be no Creation or beginning of existence in finite things. If the latter, then we must acknowledge something new to befall the Deity; 10 which implies a sort of change: and all change argues imperfection.

PHILONOUS. Pray consider what you are doing. Is it not evident, this objection concludes equally against a creation in any sense; nay, against every other act of the Deity, discoverable by the light of Nature? None of which can we conceive, otherwise than as performed in time, and having a beginning. God is a being of transcendent and unlimited perfections: his nature therefore is incomprehensible to finite spirits. It is not therefore to be expected, that any man, whether *materialist* or *immaterialist*, 20 should have exactly just notions of the Deity, his attributes, and ways of operation. If then you would infer any thing against me, your difficulty must not be drawn from the inadequateness of our conceptions of the Divine Nature, which is unavoidable on any scheme; but from the denial of matter, of which there is not one word, directly or indirectly, in what you have now objected.

HYLAS. I must acknowledge, the difficulties you are concerned to clear, are such only as arise from the non-existence of matter, and are peculiar to that notion. So far you are in the right. 30 But I cannot by any means bring my self to think there is no such peculiar repugnancy between the Creation and your opinion; though indeed where to fix it, I do not distinctly know.

PHILONOUS. What would you have! do I not acknowledge a two-fold state of things, the one ectypal or natural, the other archetypal and eternal? The former was created in time; the latter existed from everlasting in the mind of God. Is not this agreeable to the common notions of divines? or is any more than this necessary in order to conceive the Creation? But you 40 suspect some peculiar repugnancy, though you know not where it lies. To take away all possibility of scruple in the case, do but consider this one point. Either you are not able to conceive

the Creation on any hypothesis whatsoever ; and if so, there is no ground for dislike or complaint against my particular opinion on that score : or you are able to conceive it ; and if so, why not on my principles, since thereby nothing conceivable is taken away ? You have all along been allowed the full scope of sense, imagination, and reason. Whatever therefore you could before apprehend, either immediately or mediately by your senses, or by ratiocination from your senses ; whatever you could perceive, imagine or understand, remains still with you. If therefore the notion you have of the Creation ¹⁰ by other principles be intelligible, you have it still upon mine ; if it be not intelligible, I conceive it to be no notion at all ; and so there is no loss of it. And indeed it seems to me very plain, that the supposition of matter, that is, a thing perfectly unknown and inconceivable, cannot serve to make us conceive any thing. And I hope, it need not be proved to you, that if the existence of matter doth not make the Creation conceivable, the Creation's being without it inconceivable, can be no objection against its non-existence.

HYLAS. I confess, Philonous, you have almost satisfied me in this ²⁰ point of the Creation.

PHILONOUS. I would fain know why you are not quite satisfied. You tell me indeed of a repugnancy between the Mosaic history and immaterialism : but you know not where it lies. Is this reasonable, Hylas ? Can you expect I should solve a difficulty without knowing what it is ? But to pass by all that, would not a man think you were assured there is no repugnancy between the received notions of materialists and the inspired writings ?

HYLAS. And so I am.

PHILONOUS. Ought the historical part of Scripture to be understood ³⁰ in a plain obvious sense, or in a sense which is metaphysical, and out of the way ?

HYLAS. In the plain sense, doubtless.

PHILONOUS. When Moses speaks of herbs, earth, water, &c. as having been created by God ; think you not the sensible things, commonly signified by those words, are suggested to every unphilosophical reader ?

HYLAS. I cannot help thinking so.

PHILONOUS. And are not all ideas, or things perceived by sense, to be denied a real existence by the doctrine of the materialists ? ⁴⁰

HYLAS. This I have already acknowledged.

PHILONOUS. The Creation therefore, according to them, was not

the creation of things sensible, which have only a relative being, but of certain unknown natures, which have an absolute being, wherein Creation might terminate.

HYLAS. True.

PHILONOUS. Is it not therefore evident, the asserters of matter destroy the plain obvious sense of Moses, with which their notions are utterly inconsistent ; and instead of it obtrude on us I know not what, something equally unintelligible to themselves and me ?

10 HYLAS. I cannot contradict you.

PHILONOUS. Moses tells us of a Creation. A Creation of what ? of unknown quiddities, of occasions, or *substratum*s ? No certainly ; but of things obvious to the senses. You must first reconcile this with your notions, if you expect I should be reconciled to them.

HYLAS. I see you can assault me with my own weapons.

PHILONOUS. Then as to *absolute existence* ; was there ever known a more jejune notion than that ? Something it is, so abstracted and unintelligible, that you have frankly owned you could not

20 conceive it, much less explain any thing by it. But allowing matter to exist, and the notion of absolute existence to be as clear as light ; yet was this ever known to make the Creation more credible ? Nay hath it not furnished the *atheists* and *infidels* of all ages, with the most plausible argument against a Creation ? That a corporeal substance, which hath an absolute existence without the minds of spirits, should be produced out of nothing by the mere will of a spirit, hath been looked upon as a thing so contrary to all reason, so impossible and absurd, that not only the most celebrated among the ancients, but even
30 divers modern and Christian philosophers have thought matter coeternal with the Deity.¹ Lay these things together, and then judge you whether materialism disposes men to believ the creation of thing.

HYLAS. I own, Philonous, I think it does not. This of the Creation is the last objection I can think of ; and I must needs own it hath been sufficiently answered as well as the rest. Nothing now remains to be overcome, but a sort of unaccountable backwardness that I find in my self toward your notions.

PHILONOUS. When a man is swayed, he knows not why, to one side
40 of a question ; can this, think you, be any thing else but the effect of prejudice, which never fails to attend old and rooted

¹ [See my note on *Principles*, Sect. 92.—Ed.]

notions ? And indeed in this respect I cannot deny the belief of matter to have very much the advantage over the contrary opinion, with men of a learned education.

HYLAS. I confess it seems to be as you say.

PHILONOUS. As a balance therefore to this weight of prejudice, let us throw into the scale the great advantages that arise from the belief of immaterialism, both in regard to religion and human learning. The being of a God, and incorruptibility of the soul, those great articles of religion, are they not proved with the clearest and most immediate evidence ? When I say ¹⁰ the being of a *God*, I do not mean an obscure general cause of things, whereof we have no conception, but *God*, in the strict and proper sense of the word. A being whose spirituality, omnipresence, providence, omniscience, infinite power and goodness, are as conspicuous as the existence of sensible things, of which (notwithstanding the fallacious pretences and affected scruples of *sceptics*) there is no more reason to doubt, than of our own being. Then with relation to human sciences ; in natural philosophy, what intricacies, what obscurities, what contradictions, hath the belief of matter led men into ! To say ²⁰ nothing of the numberless disputes about its extent, continuity, homogeneity, gravity, divisibility, &c. do they not pretend to explain all things by bodies operating on bodies, according to the laws of motion ? and yet, are they able to comprehend how any one body should move another ? Nay, admitting there was no difficulty in reconciling the notion of an inert being with a cause ; or in conceiving how an accident might pass from one body to another ; yet by all their strained thoughts and extravagant suppositions, have they been able to reach the mechanical production of any one animal or vegetable body ? ³⁰ Can they account by the laws of motion, for sounds, tastes, smells, or colours, or for the regular course of things ? Have they accounted by physical principles for the aptitude and contrivance, even of the most inconsiderable parts of the universe ? But laying aside matter and corporeal causes, and admitting only the efficiency of an all-perfect mind, are not all the effects of Nature easy and intelligible ? If the phenomena are nothing else but *ideas* ; God is a *spirit*, but matter an unintelligent, unperceiving being. If they demonstrate an unlimited power in their cause ; God is active and omnipotent, but matter an inert ⁴⁰ mass. If the order, regularity, and usefulness of them, can

never be sufficiently admired ; God is infinitely wise and provident, but matter destitute of all contrivance and design. These surely are great advantages in *physics*. Not to mention that the apprehension of a distant Deity, naturally disposes men to a negligence in their *moral* actions, which they would be more cautious of, in case they thought Him immediately present, and acting on their minds without the interposition of matter, or unthinking second causes. Then in *metaphysics* ; what difficulties concerning entity in abstract, substantial forms, 10 hylarchic principles, plastic natures, substance and accident, principle of individuation, possibility of matter's thinking, origin of ideas, the manner how two independent substances, so widely different as *spirit* and *matter*, should mutually operate on each other?¹ What difficulties, I say, and endless disquisitions concerning these and innumerable other the like points, do we escape by supposing only spirits and ideas ? Even the *mathematics* themselves, if we take away the absolute existence of extended things, become much more clear and easy ; the most shocking paradoxes and intricate speculations in those sciences, 20 depending on the infinite divisibility of finite extension, which depends on that supposition. But what need is there to insist on the particular sciences ? Is not that opposition to all science whatsoever, that phrensy of the ancient and modern *sceptics*, built on the same foundation ? Or can you produce so much as one argument against the reality of corporeal things, or in behalf of that avowed utter ignorance of their natures, which doth not suppose their reality to consist in an external absolute existence ? Upon this supposition indeed, the objections from the change of colours in a pigeon's neck, or the appearances 30 of a broken oar in the water, must be allowed to have weight. But those and the like objections vanish, if we do not maintain the being of absolute external originals, but place the reality of things in ideas, fleeting indeed, and changeable ; however not changed at random, but according to the fixed order of Nature. For herein consists that constancy and truth of things, which secures all the concerns of life, and distinguishes that which is *real* from the irregular visions of the fancy.

1 10 *substance and accident—(A, B) subjects and adjuncts.*

1 [In this summary catalogue of impugned notions, the first six come from the Schoolmen (borrowing some from Plato and Aristotle) and early moderns, the seventh directly from Locke (*Essay*, IV iii 6, and *Second Reply to the Bishop of Worcester*), and the two last from the Cartesians.—Ed.]

HYLAS. I agree to all you have now said, and must own that nothing can incline me to embrace your opinion, more than the advantages I see it is attended with. I am by nature lazy ; and this would be a mighty abridgement in knowledge. What doubts, what hypotheses, what labyrinths of amusement, what fields of disputation, what an ocean of false learning, may be avoided by that single notion of *immaterialism* ?

PHILONOUS. After all, is there any thing farther remaining to be done ? You may remember you promised to embrace that opinion, which upon examination should appear most agreeable to common sense, and remote from *scepticism*. This by your own confession is that which denies matter, or the absolute existence of corporeal things. Nor is this all ; the same notion has been proved several ways, viewed in different lights, pursued in its consequences, and all objections against it cleared. Can there be a greater evidence of its truth ? or is it possible it should have all the marks of a true opinion, and yet be false ?

HYLAS. I own myself entirely satisfied for the present in all respects. But what security can I have that I shall still continue the same full assent to your opinion, and that no unthought-of objection ²⁰ or difficulty will occur hereafter ?

PHILONOUS. Pray, Hylas, do you in other cases, when a point is once evidently proved, withhold your assent on account of objections or difficulties it may be liable to ? Are the difficulties that attend the doctrine of incommensurable quantities, of the angle of contact, of the asymptotes to curves or the like, sufficient to make you hold out against mathematical demonstration ? Or will you disbelieve the providence of God, because there may be some particular things which you know not how to reconcile with it ? If there are difficulties attending immaterialism, there are at ³⁰ the same time direct and evident proofs for it. But for the existence of matter, there is not one proof, and far more numerous and insurmountable objections lie against it. But where are those mighty difficulties you insist on ? Alas ! you know not where or what they are ; something which may possibly occur hereafter. If this be a sufficient pretence for withholding your full assent, you should never yield it to any proposition, how free soever from exceptions, how clearly and solidly soever demonstrated.

HYLAS. You have satisfied me, Philonous.

PHILONOUS. But to arm you against all future objections, do but consider, that which bears equally hard on two contradictory

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opinions, can be a proof against neither. Whenever therefore any difficulty occurs, try if you can find a solution for it on the hypothesis of the *materialists*. Be not deceived by words ; but sound your own thoughts. And in case you cannot conceive it easier by the help of *materialism*, it is plain it can be no objection against *immaterialism*. Had you proceeded all along by this rule, you would probably have spared yourself abundance of trouble in objecting ; since of all your difficulties I challenge you to shew one that is explained by matter ; nay, which is not more unintelligible with, than without that supposition, and consequently makes rather *against* than *for* it. You should consider in each particular, whether the difficulty arises from the *non-existence of matter*. If it doth not, you might as well argue from the infinite divisibility of extension against the divine prescience, as from such a difficulty against *immaterialism*. And yet upon recollection I believe you will find this to have been often, if not always the case. You should likewise take heed not to argue on a *petilio principii*. One is apt to say, the unknown substances ought to be esteemed real things, rather than the ideas in our minds : and who can tell but the unthinking external substance may concur as a cause or instrument in the production of our ideas ? But is not this proceeding on a supposition that there are such external substances ? And to suppose this, is it not begging the question ? But above all things you should beware of imposing on your self by that vulgar sophism, which is called *ignoratio elenchi*. You talked often as if you thought I maintained the non-existence of sensible things : whereas in truth no one can be more thoroughly assured of their existence than I am : and it is you who doubt ; I should have said, positively deny it. Every thing that is seen, felt, heard, or any way perceived by the senses, is on the principles I embrace, a real being, but not on yours. Remember, the matter you contend for is an unknown somewhat (if indeed it may be termed *somewhat*) which is quite stripped of all sensible qualities, and can neither be perceived by sense, nor apprehended by the mind. Remember, I say, that it is not any object which is hard or soft, hot or cold, blue or white, round or square, &c. For all these things I affirm do exist. Though indeed I deny they have an existence distinct from being perceived ; or that they exist out of all minds whatsoever. Think on these points ; let them be attentively considered and still kept in view. Otherwise you will not comprehend the state of the question ; without which your objec-

tions will always be wide of the mark, and instead of mine, may possibly be directed (as more than once they have been) against your own notions.

HYLAS. I must needs own, Philonous, nothing seems to have kept me from agreeing with you more than this same *mistaking the question*. In denying matter, at first glimpse I am tempted to imagine you deny the things we see and feel ; but upon reflexion find there is no ground for it. What think you therefore of retaining the name *matter*, and applying it to sensible things ? This may be done without any change in your sentiments : ¹⁰ and believe me it would be a means of reconciling them to some persons, who may be more shocked at an innovation in words than in opinion.

PHILONOUS. With all my heart : retain the word *matter*, and apply it to the objects of sense, if you please, provided you do not attribute to them any subsistence distinct from their being perceived. I shall never quarrel with you for an expression. *Matter*, or *material substance*, are terms introduced by philosophers ; and as used by them, imply a sort of independency, or a subsistence distinct from being perceived by a mind : but ²⁰ are never used by common people ; or if ever, it is to signify the immediate objects of sense. One would think therefore, so long as the names of all particular things, with the terms *sensible*, *substance*, *body*, *stuff*, and the like, are retained, the word *matter* should be never missed in common talk. And in philosophical discourses it seems the best way to leave it quite out ; since there is not perhaps any one thing that hath more favoured and strengthened the depraved bent of the mind toward *atheism*, than the use of that general confused term.

HYLAS. Well but, Philonous, since I am content to give up the ³⁰ notion of an unthinking substance exterior to the mind, I think you ought not to deny me the privilege of using the word *matter* as I please, and annexing it to a collection of sensible qualities subsisting only in the mind. I freely own there is no other substance in a strict sense, than *spirit*. But I have been so long accustomed to the term *matter*, that I know not how to part with it. To say, there is no *matter* in the world, is still shocking to me. Whereas to say, there is no *matter*, if by that term be meant an unthinking substance existing without the mind : but if by *matter* is meant some sensible thing, whose existence consists in ⁴⁰ being perceived, then there is *matter* : this distinction gives it quite another turn : and men will come into your notions with

small difficulty, when they are proposed in that manner. For after all, the controversy about *matter* in the strict acceptation of it, lies altogether between you and the philosophers ; whose principles, I acknowledge, are not near so natural, or so agreeable to the common sense of mankind, and Holy Scripture, as yours. There is nothing we either desire or shun, but as it makes, or is apprehended to make some part of our happiness or misery. But what hath happiness or misery, joy or grief, pleasure or pain, to do with absolute existence, or with unknown entities, 10 abstracted from all relation to us ? It is evident, things regard us only as they are pleasing or displeasing : and they can please or displease, only so far forth as they are perceived. Farther therefore we are not concerned ; and thus far you leave things as you found them. Yet still there is something new in this doctrine. It is plain, I do not now think with the philosophers, nor yet altogether with the vulgar. I would know how the case stands in that respect : precisely, what you have added to, or altered in my former notions.

PHILONOUS. I do not pretend to be a setter-up of *new notions*. My 20 endeavours tend only to unite and place in a clearer light that truth, which was before shared between the vulgar and the philosophers : the former being of opinion, that *those things they immediately perceive are the real things* ; and the latter, that *the things immediately perceived, are ideas which exist only in the mind*. Which two notions put together, do in effect constitute the substance of what I advance.

HYLAS. I have been a long time distrusting my senses ; methought I saw things by a dim light, and through false glasses. Now the glasses are removed, and a new light breaks in upon my understanding. I am clearly convinced that I see things in their native forms ; and am no longer in pain about their unknown natures or absolute existence. This is the state I find my self in at present : though indeed the course that brought me to it, I do not yet thoroughly comprehend. You set out upon the same principles that Academics, Cartesians, and the like sects, usually do¹ ; and for a long time it looked as if you were advancing their philosophical *scepticism* ; but in the end your conclusions are directly opposite to theirs.

PHILONOUS. You see, Hylas, the water of yonder fountain, how it 40 is forced upwards, in a round column, to a certain height ; at

¹ [*I.e.* arguing that what we apprehend in sense are ideas, which the 'sceptics' read subjectively.—Ed.]

which it breaks and falls back into the basin from whence it rose : its ascent as well as descent, proceeding from the same uniform law or principle of *gravitation*. Just so, the same principles which at first view lead to *scepticism*, pursued to a certain point, bring men back to common sense.

Philosophical Correspondence
between
Berkeley and Samuel Johnson

1729-30

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THESE letters are printed at this point because they are the only part of Berkeley's correspondence dealing wholly with philosophical matters that has survived, apart from an undated letter of about 1711 to Jean Leclerc. Johnson's two letters contain the earliest known criticism of any length and weight of Berkeley's theory. They were first published, from copies kept by Johnson and acquired by the library of Columbia University, in vol. ii, pp. 263 *ff* of *Samuel Johnson . . . His Career and Writings*, edited by H. and C. Schneider (4 vols, 1929, New York). I am indebted to the Columbia University Press for permission to reprint them. Professor Luce discovered the original of Johnson's second letter in the Berkeley papers in the British Museum (Add. MS. 39311, pp. 17-20). As it is in poor condition, and lacks the final page, I have kept to the Yale copy, transcribing from a photostat reproduction. Berkeley's two letters were made available by Fraser. He took the first from T. B. Chandler's *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1805, New York), and printed it in part and undated in his *Life and Letters of Berkeley* (1871), in full and misdated June 25 in his 1901 edition of the Works, vol. ii, pp. 15 *ff* (the correct date is revealed in Johnson's reply, unknown to Fraser). He received the text of the second letter from a Mr. Gilman of Yale, and printed it along with the first, both in 1871 and in 1901.

Samuel Johnson (1696-1772) is regarded as the father of American philosophy. He was educated at Yale, and became a tutor there for a few years. He entered the Congregational ministry, but left it in 1722 to take Orders in the Church of England. Oxford made him a D.D. in 1743. In 1754 he became the first President of King's College, New York (now Columbia University). His *Elementa Philosophica* (1752, published at Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin; a third edition appeared in London in 1754) was dedicated to and deeply influenced by Berkeley, whose acquaintance he had made during the latter's sojourn at Newport, Rhode Island (1729-31). At the time of these letters, Johnson was at Stratford, Connecticut, a little more than a hundred miles from Newport. In his Autobiography

(Schneider, vol. i, p. 25) he mentions making several visits to Berkeley and writing 'many letters which were kindly answered,' so that the four letters we know are to be read as part of a larger discussion, oral and epistolary. The Schneiders' first volume contains ten further letters between the two men, not on philosophical matters, stretching from 1731 to 1751 (the first a farewell note from Berkeley as he was leaving for England), as well as three between Johnson and Berkeley's son George (1762-70)—a clear proof of the strength of the attachment. Johnson's reading list, reproduced in the same volume, shows that he was studying Berkeley's writings repeatedly over the period 1728-52.

The difficulties which Johnson puts are interesting as illustrating an early stage, in an acute mind, of the understanding and misunderstanding of Berkeley's theory. Some of them, he admits, were not his own, but those felt by his friends that he could not solve to their satisfaction. His own are the important ones, put again in his second letter. Berkeley's replies are clearly inadequate, but the reason is, I believe, the quite simple one that he saw that there was some re-thinking and re-reading that Johnson would have to do for himself. Admitting the non-existence of 'matter,' Johnson finds three problems remaining :

(1) Appealing to the fact that Berkeley had sometimes used the term 'archetype,' he wants to give it a Platonized meaning. Archetypes imply ectypes, and the relation between these is usually taken to be that of realities and copies. He asks if the mode of existence of corporeal things when not being perceived by us is that of ideas in the divine mind, our own perceived 'ideas' being copies of these. He has plainly not seen the force of Berkeley's argument against all representationism, that it entails scepticism. The 'twofold existence' that he supposes Berkeley to hint at is explicitly repudiated in *Principles*, Sect. 86. Berkeley's position is that there is only one corporeal realm, which God and we alike apprehend directly, and which is neither in His mind nor in ours as a modification, but only as an object, for it is by nature non-mental. He could certainly allow a perceived object to be called the archetype of the memory-image of that object, for here the copy and the reality, both falling within experience, can be compared. He seems to leave open the possibility that in God's mind there may be archetypes of the corporeal, in the sense of paradigms or Platonic Forms, the patterns after which He created the corporeal—the 'twofold state of things' admitted in the *Three Dialogues* (above, p. 254); but they would fall for con-

sideration in metaphysics, not entering as factors into the epistemological situation, which is all that Berkeley has considered in the *Principles* (Part I) and the *Three Dialogues*, the two works in question in this correspondence. Why and how God created the corporeal world were problems that belonged to that Part II of the *Principles* which was never published.

(2) Johnson seems anxious to retain Newton's absolute space and time. Their existence independent of all mind he rejects along with that of "matter," but he wants to preserve them as being in reality attributes of God.¹ He feels the need of a 'real' space to account for the distinctness of minds from one another, for their non-coalescence ; and he requires the concepts of infinite space and infinite time to be kept as the nearest analogues we can get to the conception of God's immensity and eternity respectively —these are not to be dismissed as abstract 'ideas,' for they are derived by inference from what is not an 'idea,' but from what Berkeley was later to call the 'notion' of God. Berkeley contents himself with reaffirming his view that space and time are only particular relations of particular 'ideas,' and with referring Johnson back to his books. He could scarcely do any more than this, for Johnson's whole way of thinking in this subject cuts right across his own—for Berkeley does allow a real space, but not independent of corporeal objects, so that by itself it is only an abstract 'idea,' i.e. impossible ; this space is not in God as attribute but before Him as object, so that our knowledge of it is knowledge of *it* and not of some eminent analogue of it in God's nature ; and mind being essentially non-spatial, space cannot be either a property of God's mind or the boundary between finite minds.

(3) Johnson desiderates a mental substance as the real ground of a mind's continuity of existence ; the whole *esse* of a mind cannot be *percipere*, for mind exists when not perceiving, in perceiving it is passive, it acts in reasoning and willing, and activity implies an agent. Berkeley's reply is again undeveloped : he restates his inability to think of any form of existence except perceiving and being perceived, this being the axiom of his system. We lack his doctrine of mind, because it was to come into the lost Part II of the *Principles*, but remarks here and there indicate that for him its unity is a datum of introspection, not a postulated occult substance of which perceiving and willing are the manifest modes. Johnson, in his objection to Berkeley's dictum, 'The soul always

¹ *Cp.* my note on *Principles*, Sect. 117.

thinks' (*Principles*, 98), does not consider it in relation to the theory of time with which it is bound up: time being only a relation of 'ideas' and of 'notions,' the absence of these involves the absence of that. The soul always thinks because 'always' has no meaning apart from something thought. 'Always' does not for Berkeley mean 'timeless.' He could not have subscribed to the separation of the soul and its acts implied in Plotinus's ἄχρονος πᾶσα ἡ γνῶσις . . . οὐδὲ αἱ ψυχαὶ ἐν χρόνῳ ἀλλὰ τὰ πάθη αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ πονήματα.

I JOHNSON TO BERKELEY

Stratford, Sept. 10, 1729

Rev'd Sir :

The kind invitation you gave me to lay before you any difficulties that should occur to me in reading those excellent books which you was pleased to order into my hands, is all the apology I shall offer for the trouble I now presume to give you. But nothing could encourage me to expose to your view my low and mean way of thinking and writing, but my hopes of an interest in that candor and tenderness which are so conspicuous both in your writings and conversation.

These books (for which I stand humbly obliged to you) contain speculations the most surprisingly ingenious I have ever met with ; and I must confess that the reading of them has almost convinced me that matter as it has been commonly defined for an unknown Quiddity is but a mere non-entity. That it is a strong presumption against the existence of it, that there never could be conceived any manner of connection between it and our ideas. That the *esse* of things is only their *percipi* ; and that the rescuing us from the absurdities of abstract ideas and the gross notion of matter that have so much obtained, deserves well of the learned world, in that it clears away very many difficulties and perplexities in the sciences.

And I am of opinion that this way of thinking can't fail of prevailing in the world, because it is likely to prevail very much among us in these parts, several ingenious men having entirely come in to it. But there are many others on the other hand that cannot be reconciled to it ; tho' of these there are some who have a very good opinion of it and plainly see many happy consequences attending it, on account of which they are well inclined to embrace it, but think they find some difficulties in their way which they can't get over, and some objections not sufficiently answered to their satisfaction. And since you have condescended to give me leave to do so, I will make bold to lay before you sundry things, which yet remain in the dark either to myself or to others, and which I can't account for either to my own, or at least to their satisfaction.

1 The great prejudice that lies against it with some is its repugnancy to and subversion of Sir I. Newton's philosophy in sundry points ; to which they have been so much attached that they can't suffer themselves in the least to call it in question in any instance, but indeed it does not appear to me so inconsistent therewith as at first blush it did, for the laws of nature which he so happily explains are the same whether matter be supposed or not. However, let Sir Isaac Newton, or any other man, be heard only so far as his opinion is supported by reason :—but after all I confess I have so great a regard for the philosophy of that great man, that I would gladly see as much of it as may be, to obtain in this ideal scheme.

2 The objection, that it takes away all subordinate natural causes, and accounts for all appearances merely by the immediate will of the supreme spirit, does not seem to many to be answered to their satisfaction. It is readily granted that our ideas are inert, and can't cause one another, and are truly only signs one of another. For instance my idea of fire is not the cause of my idea of burning and of ashes. But inasmuch as these ideas are so connected as that they seem necessarily to point out to us the relations of cause and effect, we can't help thinking that our ideas are pictures of things without our minds at least, tho' not without the Great Mind, and which are their archetypes, between which these relations do obtain. I kindle a fire and leave it, no created mind beholds it ; I return again and find a great alteration in the fuel ; has there not been in my absence all the while that gradual alteration making in the archetype of my idea of wood which I should have had the idea of if I had been present ? And is there not some archetype of my idea of the fire, which under the agency of the Divine Will has gradually caused this alteration ? And so in all other instances, our ideas are so connected, that they seem necessarily to refer our minds to some originals which are properly (tho' subordinate) causes and effects one of another ; insomuch that unless they be so, we can't help thinking ourselves under a perpetual delusion.

3 That all the phenomena of nature, must ultimately be referred to the will of the Infinite Spirit, is what must be allowed ; but to suppose his immediate energy in the production of every effect, does not seem to impress so lively and great a sense of his power and wisdom upon our minds, as to suppose a subordination of causes and effects among the archetypes of our ideas, as he that should make a watch or clock of ever so beautiful an appearance

and that should measure the time ever so exactly yet if he should be obliged to stand by it and influence and direct all its motions, he would seem but very deficient in both his ability and skill in comparison with him who should be able to make one that would regularly keep on its motion and measure the time for a considerable while without the intervention of any immediate force of its author or any one else impressed upon it.

4 And as this tenet seems thus to abate our sense of the wisdom and power of God, so there are some that cannot be persuaded that it is sufficiently cleared from bearing hard on his holiness ; those who suppose that the corrupt affections of our souls and evil practices consequent to them, are occasioned by certain irregular mechanical motions of our bodies, and that these motions come to have an habitual irregular bias and tendency by means of our own voluntary indulgence to them, which we might have governed to better purpose, do in this way of thinking, sufficiently bring the guilt of those ill habits and actions upon ourselves ; but if in an habitual sinner, every object and motion be but an idea, and every wicked appetite the effect of such a set of ideas, and these ideas, the immediate effect of the Almighty upon his mind ; it seems to follow, that the immediate cause of such ideas must be the cause of those immoral appetites and actions ; because he is borne down before them seemingly, even in spite of himself. At first indeed they were only occasions, which might be withheld, and so, proper means of trial, but now they become causes of his immoralities. When therefore a person is under the power of a vicious habit, and it can't but be foreseen that the suggestion of such and such ideas will unavoidably produce those immoralities, how can it consist with the holiness of God to suggest them ?

5 It is, after all that has been said on that head, still something shocking to many to think that there should be nothing but a mere show in all the art and contrivance appearing in the structure (for instance) of a human body, particularly of the organs of sense. The curious structure of the eye, what can it be more than merely a fine show, if there be no connection more than you admit of, between that and vision ? It seems from the make of it to be designed for an instrument or means of conveying the images of external things to the perceptive faculty within ; and if it be not so, if it be really of no use in conveying visible objects to our minds, and if our visible ideas are immediately created in them by the will of the Almighty, why should it be made to seem to be an instrument or medium as much as if indeed it really were so ? It

is evident, from the conveying of images into a dark room thro' a lens, that the eye is a lens, and that the images of things are painted on the bottom of it. But to what purpose is all this, if there be no connection between this fine apparatus and the act of vision ; can it be thought a sufficient argument that there is no connection between them because we can't discover it, or conceive how it should be ?

6 There are some who say, that if our sensations don't depend on any bodily organs—they don't see how death can be supposed to make any alteration in the manner of our perception, or indeed how there should be (properly speaking) any separate state of the soul at all. For if our bodies are nothing but ideas, and if our having ideas in this present state does not depend on what are thought to be the organs of sense, and lastly, if we are supposed (as doubtless we must) to have ideas in that state ; it should seem that immediately upon our remove from our present situation, we should still be attended with the same ideas of bodies as we have now, and consequently with the same bodies or at least with bodies however different, and if so, what room is there left for any resurrection, properly so-called ? So that while this tenet delivers us from the embarrassments that attend the doctrine of a material resurrection, it seems to have no place for any resurrection at all, at least in the sense that word seems to bear in St. John 5 ; 28, 29.

7 Some of us are at a loss to understand your meaning when you speak of archetypes. You say the being of things consists in their being perceived. And that things are nothing but ideas, that our ideas have no unperceived archetypes, but yet you allow archetypes to our ideas when things are not perceived by our minds ; they exist in, *i.e.* are perceived by, some other mind. Now I understand you, that there is a two-fold existence of things or ideas, one in the divine mind, and the other in created minds ; the one archetypal, and the other ectypal ; that, therefore, the real original and permanent existence of things is archetypal, being ideas in *mente Divinæ*, and that our ideas are copies of them, and so far forth real things as they are correspondent to their archetypes and exhibited to us, or begotten in us by the will of the Almighty, in such measure and degrees and by such stated laws and rules as He is pleased to observe ; that, therefore, there is no unperceived substance intervening between the divine ideas and ours as a medium, occasion or instrument by which He begets our ideas in us, but that which was thought to be the material existence of

things is in truth only ideal in the divine mind. Do I understand you right ? Is it not therefore your meaning, that the existence of our ideas (*i.e.* the cctypal things) depends upon our perceiving them, yet there are external to any created mind, in the all-comprehending Spirit, real and permanent archetypes (as stable and permanent as ever matter was thought to be), to which these ideas of ours are correspondent, and so that (tho' our visible and tangible ideas are *toto coelo* different and distinct things, yet) there may be said to be external to my mind, in the divine mind, an archetype (for instance of the candle that is before me) in which the originals of both my visible and tangible ideas, light, heat, whiteness, softness, etc., under such a particular cylindrical figure, are united, so that it may be properly said to be the same thing that I both see and feel ?

8 If this, or something like it might be understood to be your meaning, it would seem less shocking to say that we don't see and feel the same thing, because we can't dispossess our minds of the notion of an external world, and would be allowed to conceive that, tho' there were no intelligent creature before Adam to be a spectator of it, yet the world was really six days in *archetypo*, gradually proceeding from an informal chaotic state into that beautiful show wherein it first appeared to his mind, and that the comet that appeared in 1680 (for instance) has now, tho' no created mind beholds it, a real existence in the all-comprehending spirit, and is making its prodigious tour through the vast fields of ether, and lastly that the whole vast congeries of heaven and earth, the mighty systems of worlds with all their furniture, have a real being in the eternal mind antecedent to and independent on the perception of created spirit, and that when we see and feel, etc., that that almighty mind, by his immediate *fiat*, begets in our minds (*pro nostro modulo*) ideas correspondent to them, and which may be imagined in some degreee resemblances of them.

9 But if there be archetypes to our ideas, will it not follow that there is external space, extention, figure and motion, as being archetypes of our ideas, to which we give these names. And indeed for my part I cannot disengage my mind from the persuasion that there is external space ; when I have been trying ever so much to conceive of space as being nothing but an idea in my mind, it will return upon me even in spite of my utmost efforts, certainly there must be, there can't but be, external space. The length, breadth, and thickness of any idea, it's true, are but ideas ; the distance between two trees in my mind is but an idea, but if

there are archetypes to the ideas of the trees, there must be an archetypc to the idea of the distance between them. Nor can I see how it follows that there is no external absolute hheight, bigness, or distance of things, because they appcar greater or less to us according as we are nearer or remote from them, or see them with our naked eyes, or with glasses ; any more than it follows that a man, for instance, is not really absolutely six foot high measured by a two foot rule applied to his body, because divers pictures of him may be drawn some six, some four, some two foot long according to the same measurc. Nobody ever imagined that the idea of distance is without the mind, but does it therefore follow that there is no external distance to which the idea is correspondent, for instance, betwecn Rhode Island and Stratford ? Truly I wish it were not so great, that I might be so happy as to have a more easy access to you, and more nearly enjoy the advantagcs of your instructions.

10 You allow spirits to have a real existence external to one another. Methinks, if so, there must be distance between them, and space wherein they exist, or else they must all exist in one individual spot or point, and as it were coincide one with another. I can't see how extermal space and duration are any more abstract ideas than spirits. As we have (properly speaking) no ideas of spirits, so, indeed, neither have we of external space and duration. But it seems to me that the existence of these must unavoidably follow from the existence of those, insomuch that I can no more conceive of their not bcing, than I can conceive of the non-existence of the infinite and eternal mind. They seem as necessarily existent independent of any created mind as the Deity Himself. Or must we say there is nothing in Dr. Clarke's argument *a priori*, in his demonstration of the being and attributes of God, or in what Sir Isaac Newton says about the infinity and eternity of God in his *Scholium Generale* to his *Principia*?¹ I should be glad to know your sense of what those two authors say upon this subject.

11 You will forgive the confusedness of my thoughts and not wonder at my writing like a man something bewildered, since I am, as it were, got into a new world amazed at everything about me. These ideas of ours, what are they ? Is the substance of the mind the *substratum* to its ideas ? Is it proper to call them modifications of our minds ? Or impressions upon them ? Or what ? Truly I can't tell what to make of them, any more than of matter itself. What is the *esse* of spirits ?—you seem to think it impossible

¹ [Cp. my note on *Principles*, Sect. 117.—Ed.]

to abstract their existence from their thinking. *Princ.* p. 143. sec. 98. Is then the *esse* of minds nothing else but *percipere*, as the *esse* of ideas is *percipi*? Certainly, methinks there must be an unknown somewhat that thinks and acts, as difficult to be conceived of as matter, and the creation of which, as much beyond us as the creation of matter. Can actions be the *esse* of anything? Can they exist or be exerted without some being who is the agent? And may not that being be easily imagined to exist without acting, e.g. without thinking? And consequently (for you are there speaking of duration) may he not be said *durare, etsi non cogitet*, to persist in being, tho' thinking were intermitted for a while? And is not this sometimes fact? The duration of the eternal mind, must certainly imply some thing besides an eternal succession of ideas. May I not then conceive that, tho' I get my idea of duration by observing the succession of ideas in my mind, yet there is a *perseverare in existendo*, a duration of my being, and of the being of other spirits distinct from, and independent of, this succession of ideas.

But, Sir, I doubt I have more than tired your patience with so many (and I fear you will think them impertinent) questions; for tho' they are difficulties with me, or at least with some in my neighbourhood, for whose sake, in part, I write, yet I don't imagine they can appear such to you, who have so perfectly digested your thoughts upon this subject. And perhaps they may vanish before me upon a more mature consideration of it. However, I should be very thankful for your assistance, if it were not a pity you should waste your time (which would be employed to much better purposes) in writing to a person so obscure and so unworthy of such a favor as I am. But I shall live with some impatience till I see the second part of your design accomplished, wherein I hope to see these (if they can be thought such) or any other objections, that may have occurred to you since your writing the first part, obviated; and the usefulness of this doctrine more particularly displayed in the further application of it to the arts and sciences. May we not hope to see logic, mathematics, and natural philosophy, pneumatology, theology and morality, all in their order, appearing with a new lustre under the advantages they may receive from it? You have at least given us to hope for a geometry cleared of many perplexities that render that sort of study troublesome, which I shall be very glad of, who have found that science more irksome to me than any other, tho', indeed, I am but very little versed in any of them. But I will not trespass

any further upon your patience. My very humble service to Mr. James and Mr. Dalton,¹ and I am with the greatest veneration,

Rev'd Sir,
your most obliged
and most obedient
humble servant
Samuel Johnson

¹ [These had accompanied Berkeley from England. The former became Sir John James, Bart., of Bury St. Edmunds; one of Berkeley's most interesting letters was to him (in Fraser, *Life and Letters of Berkeley*, pp. 269-80, and *Works*, 1901, vol. iv, pp. 521-34). Richard Dalton came from Lincolnshire.—Ed.]

II BERKELEY TO JOHNSON

[Nov. 25, 1729]

Reverend Sir,

The ingenious letter you favoured me with found me very much indisposed with a gathering or imposthummation in my head, which confined me several weeks, and is now, I thank God, relieved. The objections of a candid thinking man to what I have written will always be welcome, and I shall not fail to give all the satisfaction I am able, not without hopes of convincing or being convinced. It is a common fault for men to hate opposition, and be too much wedded to their own opinions. I am so sensible of this in others that I could not pardon it to myself if I considered mine any further than they seem to me to be true ; which I shall the better be able to judge of when they have passed the scrutiny of persons so well qualified to examine them as you and your friends appear to be, to whom my illness must be an apology for not sending this answer sooner.

1 The true use and end of Natural Philosophy is to explain the phenomena of nature ; which is done by discovering the laws of nature, and reducing particular appearances to them. This is Sir Isaac Newton's method ; and such method or design is not in the least inconsistent with the principles I lay down. This mechanical philosophy doth not assign or suppose any one natural efficient cause in the strict and proper sense ; nor is it, as to its use, concerned about matter ; nor is matter connected therewith ; nor doth it infer the being of matter. It must be owned, indeed, that the mechanical philosophers do suppose (though unnecessarily) the being of matter. They do even pretend to demonstrate that matter is proportional to gravity, which, if they could, this indeed would furnish an unanswerable objection. But let us examine their demonstration. It is laid down in the first place, that the momentum of any body is the product of its quantity by its velocity, *moles in celeritatem ducta*. If, therefore, the velocity is given, the momentum will be as its quantity. But it is observed that bodies of all kinds descend in vacuo with the same velocity ; therefore the momentum of descending bodies is as the quantity or moles, *i.e.* gravity is as matter. But this argument concludes

nothing, and is a mere circle. For, I ask, when it is premised that the momentum is equal to the *moles in celeritatem ducta*, how the moles or quantity of matter is estimated? If you say, by extent, the proposition is not true; if by weight, then you suppose that the quantity of matter is proportional to matter; *i.e.* the conclusion is taken for granted in one of the premises. As for absolute space and motion, which are also supposed without any necessity or use, I refer you to what I have already published; particularly in a Latin treatise, *De Motu*, which I shall take care to send to you.

2 Cause is taken in different senses. A proper active efficient cause I can conceive none but Spirit; nor any action, strictly speaking, but where there is Will. But this doth not hinder the allowing occasional causes (which are in truth but signs); and more is not requisite in the best physics, *i.e.* the mechanical philosophy. Neither doth it hinder the admitting other causes besides God; such as spirits of different orders, which may be termed active causes, as acting indeed, though by limited and derivative powers. But as for an unthinking agent, no point of physics is explained by it, nor is it conceivable.

3 Those who have all along contended for a material world have yet acknowledged that *natura naturans* (to use the language of the Schoolmen) is God; and that the divine conservation of things is equipollent to, and in fact the same thing with, a continued repeated creation: in a word, that conservation and creation differ only in the *terminus a quo*. These are the common opinions of the Schoolmen; and Durandus,¹ who held the world to be a machine like a clock, made and put in motion by God, but afterwards continuing to go of itself, was therein particular, and had few followers. The very poets teach a doctrine not unlike the schools—*Mens agitat molem* (Virg. *Aenaeid* VI). The Stoicks and Platonists are everywhere full of the same notion. I am not therefore singular in this point itself, so much as in my way of proving it. Further, it seems to me that the power and wisdom of God are as worthily set forth by supposing Him to act immediately as an omnipresent infinitely active Spirit, as by supposing Him to act by the mediation of subordinate causes, in preserving and governing the natural world. A clock may indeed go independent of its

¹ [The reference seems to be to Durand de St. Pourçain (died 1332). *Cp.* his *In Sententias Petri Lombardi Comm.*, lib. II, dist. I, qu. v: 'Non oportet quod Deus immediate coagat, sed solum mediate, conservando naturam et virtutem causae secundae.'—Ed.]

maker or artificer, inasmuch as the gravitation of its pendulum proceeds from another cause, and that the artificer is not the adequate cause of the clock ; so that the analogy would not be just to suppose a clock is in respect of its artist what the world is in respect of its Creator. For aught I can see, it is no disparagement to the perfections of God to say that all things necessarily depend on Him as their Conservator as well as Creator, and that all nature would shrink to nothing, if not upheld and preserved in being by the same force that first created it. This I am sure is agreeable to Holy Scripture, as well as to the writings of the most esteemed philosophers ; and if it is to be considered that men make use of tools and machines to supply defect of power in themselves, we shall think it no honour to the Divinity to attribute such things to Him.

4 As to guilt,¹ it is the same thing whether I kill a man with my hands or an instrument ; whether I do it myself or make use of a ruffian. The imputation therefore upon the sanctity of God is equal, whether we suppose our sensations to be produced immediately by God, or by the mediation of instruments and subordinate causes, all which are His creatures, and moved by His laws. This theological consideration, therefore, may be waved, as leading beside the question ; for such I hold all points to be which bear equally hard on both sides of it. Difficulties about the principle of moral actions will cease, if we consider that all guilt is in the will, and that our ideas, from whatever cause they are produced, are alike inert.

5 As to the art and contrivance in the parts of animals, &c., I have considered that matter in the *Principles of Human Knowledge*,² and, if I mistake not, sufficiently shewn the wisdom and use thercof, considered as signs and means of information. I do not indeed wonder that on first reading what I have written, men are not thoroughly convinced. On the contrary, I should very much wonder if prejudices, which have been many years taking root, should be extirpated in a few hours' reading. I had no inclination to trouble the world with large volumes. What I have done was rather with a view of giving hints to thinking men, who have leisure and curiosity to go to the bottom of things, and pursue them in their own minds. Two or three times reading these small tracts, and making what is read the occasion of thinking, would, I believe, render the whole familiar and easy to the mind, and take off that shocking

¹ [Cp. *Three Dialogues*, above, p. 236.—Ed.] ² [Sects. 60-66.—Ed.]
(630) 19

appearance which hath often been observed to attend speculative truths.

6 I see no difficulty in conceiving a change of state, such as is vulgarly called Death, as well without as with material substance. It is sufficient for that purpose that we allow sensible bodies, *i.e.* such as are immediately perceived by sight and touch ; the existence of which I am so far from questioning (as philosophers are used to do), that I establish it, I think, upon evident principles. Now, it seems very easy to conceive the soul to exist in a separate state (*i.e.* divested from those limits and laws of motion and perception with which she is embarrassed here), and to exercise herself on new ideas, without the intervention of these tangible things we call bodies. It is even very possible to apprehend how the soul may have ideas of colour without an eye, or of sounds without an ear.

And now, Sir, I submit these hints (which I have hastily thrown together as soon as my illness gave me leave) to your own maturer thoughts, which after all you will find the best instructors. What you have seen of mine was published when I was very young, and without doubt hath many defects. For though the notions should be true (as I verily think they are), yet it is difficult to express them clearly and consistently, language being framed to common use and received prejudices. I do not therefore pretend that my books can teach truth. All I hope for is, that they may be an occasion to inquisitive men of discovering truth, by consulting their own minds, and looking into their own thoughts. As to the Second Part of my treatise concerning the *Principles of Human Knowledge*,¹ the fact is that I had made a considerable progress in it ; but the manuscript was lost about fourteen years ago, during my travels in Italy, and I never had leisure since to do so disagreeable a thing as writing twice on the same subject.

Objections passing through your hands have their full force and clearness. I like them the better. This intercourse with a man of parts and philosophic genius is very agreeable. I sincerely wish we were nearer neighbours. In the meantime, whenever either you or your friends favour me with their thoughts, you may be sure of a punctual correspondence on my part. Before I have done I will venture to recommend these points : (1) To consider well the answers I have already given in my books to several objections. (2) To consider whether any new objection that shall occur doth not suppose the doctrine of abstract general ideas.

¹ [See above, p. 5.—Ed.]

(3) Whether the difficulties proposed in objection to my scheme can be solved by the contrary ; for if they cannot, it is plain they can be no objections to mine.

I know not whether you have got my treatise concerning the *Principles of Human Knowledge*.¹ I intend to send it to you with my tract *De Motu*. My humble service to your friends, to whom I understand I am indebted for some part of your letter.

I am your faithful humble servant,

Georgc Berkeley.

¹ [Johnson's own reading-list shows that he had read the *Principles* in 1727-8, and again 1728-9, but the copy was a borrowed one (see end of J.'s second letter). In both his letters he seems to have only the *Three Dialogues* freshly in mind.—Ed.]

III JOHNSON TO BERKELEY

Rev'd Sir :—

Yours of November 25th, I received not till January 17th, and this being the first convenient opportunity I now return you my humblcst thanks for it.

I am very sorry to understand that you have labored under the illness you mention, but am exceeding glad and thankful for your recovery ; I pray God preserve your life and health, that you may have opportunity to perfect these grcat and good designs for the advancement of learning and religion wherewith your mind labours.

I am very much obliged to you for the favorable opinion you are pleased to express at what I made bold to write to you and that you have so kindly vouchsafed so large and particular an answer to it. But you have done me too great an honor in putting any value on my judgment ; for it is impossible my thoughts on this subject should be of any consequence, who have been bred up under the greatest disadvantages, and have had so little ability and opportunity to bc instructed in things of this naturc. And therefore I should be very vain pretend any thing else but to be a learner ; 'tis merely with this view that I give you this trouble.

I am sensible that the greatest part of what I wrote was owing to not sufficiently attending to those three important considerations you suggest at the end of your letter : and I hope a little more time and a more careful attention to and application of them, will clear up what difficulties yet lie in the way of our entirely coming into your sentiments. Indced I had not had opportunity sufficiently to digest your books ; for no sooner had I just read them over, but they were greedily demanded by my friends, who live much scattered up and down, and who expected I would bring them home with me, because I had told them before that if the books were to be had in Boston, I intended to purchase a set of them ; and indeed they have not yet quite finished their tour. The *Theory of Vision* is still at New York and the *Dialogues* just gone to Long Island. But I am the better content to want them because I know they are doing good.

For my part I am content to give up the cause of matter, glad to get rid of the absurdities thereon depending if it be defensible, I am sure, at least, it is not in my power to defend it. And being spoiled of that sandy foundation, I only want now to be thoroughly taught how and where to set down my foot again and make out a clear and consistent scheme without it. And of all the particulars I troubled you with before, there remain only these that I have any difficulty about, *viz.*, archetypes, space and duration, and the *esse* of spirits. And indeed these were the chief of my difficulties before. Most of the rest were such objections as I found by conversation among my acquaintance, did not appear to them sufficiently answered. But I believe upon a more mature consideration of the matter, and especially of this kind reply, they will see reason to be better satisfied. They that have seen it (especially my friend Mr. Wetmore) join with me in thankfully acknowledging your kindness, and return their very humble service to you.

1 As to those difficulties that yet remain with me, I believe all my hesitation about the first of them (and very likely the rest) is owing to my dulness and want of attention so as not rightly to apprehend your meaning. I believe I expressed myself uncouthly about archetypes in my 7th and 8th articles, but upon looking back upon your *Dialogues*, and comparing again three or four passages, I can't think I meant any thing different from what you intended.

You allow, *Dial.* p. 74, 'That things have an existence distinct from being perceived by us' (*i.e.*, any created spirits), 'and that they exist in, *i.e.* are perceived by, the infinite and omnipresent mind who contains and supports this sensible world as being perceived by him.' And p. 109, 'That things have an existence exterior to our minds, and that during the intervals of their being perceived by us, they exist in another (*i.e.* the infinite) mind'; from whence you justly and excellently infer the certainty of his existence, 'who knows and comprehends all things and exhibits them to our view in such manner and according to such rules as he himself has ordained.' And p. 113, 'That, *e.g.* a tree, when we don't perceive it, exists without our minds in the infinite mind of God.' And this exterior existence of things (if I understand you right) is what you call the archetypal state of things, p. 150.

From those and the like expressions, I gathered what I said about the archetypes of our ideas, and thence inferred that there is exterior to us, in the divine mind, a system of universal nature, whereof the ideas we have are in such a degree resemblances as

the Almighty is pleased to communicate to us. And I cannot yet see but my inference was just ; because according to you, the ideas we see are not in the divine mind, but in our own. When, therefore, you say sensible things exist in, as being perceived by, the infinite mind I humbly conceive you must be understood that the originals or archetypes of our sensible things or ideas exist independent of us in the infinite mind, or that sensible things exist *in archetypo* in the divine mind. The divine idea, therefore, of a tree I suppose (or a tree in the divine mind), must be the original or archetype of ours, and ours a copy or image of His (our ideas images of His, in the same sense as our souls are images of Him) of which there may be several, in several created minds, like so many several pictures of the same original to which they are all to be referred.

When therefore, several people are said to see the same tree or star, etc., whether at the same or at so many several distances from it, it is (if I understand you) *unum et idem in archetypo*, tho' *multiplex et diversum in ectypo*, for it is as evident that your idea is not mine nor mine yours when we say we both look on the same tree, as that you are not I, nor I you. But in having each our idea, we being dependent upon and impressed upon by the same almighty mind, wherein you say this tree exists, while we shut our eyes (and doubtless you mean the same also, while they are open), our several trees must, I think be so many pictures (if I may so call them) of the one original, the tree in the infinite mind, and so of all other things. Thus I understand you—not indeed that our ideas are in any measure adequate resemblances of the system in the divine mind, but however that they are just and true resemblances or copies of it, so far as He is pleased to communicate His mind to us.

2 As to space and duration, I do not pretend to have any other notion of their exterior existence than what is necessarily implied in the notion we have of God ; I do not suppose they are any thing distinct from, or exterior to, the infinite and eternal mind ; for I conclude with you that there is nothing exterior to my mind but God and other spirits with the attributes or properties belonging to them and ideas contained in them.

External space and duration therefore I take to be those properties or attributes in God, to which our ideas, which we signify by those names, are correspondent, and of which they are the faint shadows. This I take to be Sir Isaac Newton's meaning when he says, *Schol. General. Deus—durat semper et adest ubique et*

existendo semper et ubique, durationem et spacium, eternitatem et infinitatem constituit. And in his *Optics* calls space *as it were God's boundless sensorium*, nor can I think you have a different notion of these attributes from that great philosopher, tho' you may differ in your ways of expressing or explaining yourselves. However it be, when you call the Deity infinite and eternal, and in that most beautiful and charming description, *Dial.* p. 71, etc., when you speak of the *abyss of space and boundless extent* beyond thought and imagination, I don't know how to understand you any otherwisc than I understood Sir Isaac, when he uses the like expressions. The truth is we have no proper ideas of God or His attributes, and conceive of them only by analogy from what we find in oursclves ; and so, I think we conceive His immensity and eternity to be what in Him are correspondent to our space and duration.¹

As for the *punctum stans* of the Schools, and the $\tau\delta\ \nu\bar\nu$ of the Platonists, they are notions too fine for my gross thoughts ; I can't tell what to make of those words, they don't seem to convey any ideas or notions to my mind, and whatever the matter is, the longer I think of them, the more they disappear, and seem to dwindle away into nothing. Indeed they seem to me vcry much like abstract ideas, but I doubt the reason is because I never rightly understood them. I don't see why the term *punctum stans* may not as well, at least, be applied to the immensity as the eternity of God ; for the word *punctum* is more commonly used in relation to extension or space than duration ; and to say that a being is immense, and yet that it is but a point, and that its duration is perpetual without beginning or end, and yet that it is but a $\tau\delta\ \nu\bar\nu$, looks to me like a contradiction.

I can't therefore understand the term $\tau\delta\ \nu\bar\nu$ unless it be designed to adumbrate the divine omniscience or the perfection of the divine knowledge, by the more perfect notion we have of things present than of things past ; and in this sense it would imply that all things past, present and to come are always at every point of duration equally perfectly known or present to God's mind (tho' in a manner infinitely more perfect), as the things that are known to us are present to our minds at any point of our duration which we call *now*. So that with respect to His equally perfect knowledge of things past, present or to come, it is in effect always now with Him. To this purpose it seems well applied and intelligible enough, but His duration I take to be a different thing from this, as that point of our duration which we call *now*, is a different thing

¹ [Cp. my note on *Principles*, Sect. 117.—Ed.]

from our actual knowledge of things, as distinguished from our remembrance. And it may as well be said that God's immensity consists in His knowing at once what is, and is transacted in all places (e.g. China, Jupiter, Saturn, all the systems of the fixed stars, etc.) everywhere, however so remote from us (tho' in a manner infinitely more perfect), as we know what is, and is transacted in us and about us just at hand ; as that His eternity consists in this $\tau\ddot{o} \nu\ddot{v}v$ as above explained, i.e. in His knowing things present, past and to come, however so remote, all at once or equally perfectly, as we know the things that are present to us now.

In short our ideas expressed by the terms immensity and eternity are only space and duration considered as boundless or with the negation of any limits, and I can't help thinking there is something analogous to them without us, being in and belonging to, or attributes of, that glorious mind, whom for that reason we call immense and eternal, in whom we and all other spirits, *live, move and have our being*, not all in a point, but in so many different points places or *alicubis*, and variously situated with respect one to another, or else as I said before, it seems as if we should all coincide one with another.

I conclude, if I am wrong in my notion of external space, and duration, it is owing to the riveted prejudices of abstract ideas ; but really when I have thought it over and over again in my feeble way of thinking, I can't see any connection between them (as I understand them) and that doctrine. 'They don't seem to be any more abstract ideas than spirits, for, as I said, I take them to be attributes of the necessarily existing spirit ; and consequently the same reasons that convince me of his existence, bring with them the existence of these attributes. So that of the ways of coming to the knowledge of things that you mention, it is that of inference or deduction by which I seem to know that there is external infinite space and duration because there is without me a mind infinite and eternal.

3 As to the *esse* of spirits, I know Descartes held the soul always thinks, but I thought Mr. Locke had sufficiently confuted this notion, which he seems to have entertained only to serve an hypothesis. The Schoolmen, it is true, call the soul *actus* and God *Actus purus* ; but I confess I never could well understand their meaning, perhaps because I never had opportunity to be much versed in their writings. I should have thought the Schoolmen to be of all sorts of writers the most unlikely to have had recourse to for the understanding of your sentiments, because they of all others,

deal the most in abstract ideas ; tho' to place the very being of spirits in the mere act of thinking, seems to me very much like making abstract ideas of them.

There is certainly something passive in our souls, we are purely passive in the reception of our ideas ; and reasoning and willing are actions of something that reasons and wills, and therefore must be only modalities of that something. Nor does it seem to me that when I say (something) I mean an abstract idea. It is true I have no idea of it, but I feel it ; I feel that it is, because I feel or am conscious of the exertions of it ; but the exertions of it are not the thing but the modalities of it, distinguished from it as actions from an agent, which seem to me distinguishable without having recourse to abstract ideas.

And therefore when I suppose the existence of a spirit while it does not actually think, it does not appear to me that I do it by supposing an abstract idea of existence, and another of absolute time. The existence of John asleep by me, without so much as a dream is not an abstract idea, nor is the time passing the while an abstract idea, they are only partial considerations of him. *Perseverare in existendo* in general, without reflecting on any particular thing existing, I take to be what is called an abstract idea of time or duration ; but the *perseverare in existendo* of John is, if I mistake not, a partial consideration of him. And I think it is as easy to conceive of him as continuing to exist without thinking as without seeing.

Has a child no soul till it actually perceives ? And is there not such a thing as sleeping without dreaming, or being in a *deliquium* without a thought ? If there be, and yet at the same time the *esse* of a spirit be nothing else but its actual thinking, the soul must be dead during those intervals ; and if ceasing or intermitting to think be the ceasing to be, or death of the soul, it is many times and easily put to death.¹ According to this tenet, it seems to me the soul may sleep on to the resurrection, or rather may wake up in the resurrection state, the next moment after death. Nay I don't see upon what we can build any natural argument for the soul's immortality. I think I once heard you allow a principle of perception and spontaneous motion in beasts. Now if their *esse* as well as ours consists in perceiving, upon what is the natural immortality of our souls founded that will not equally conclude in favour of them ? I mention this last consideration because I am

¹ [In *Principles*, Sect. 98, Berkeley roundly declares 'the soul always thinks.' —Ed.]

at a loss to understand how you state the argument for the soul's natural immortality ; for the argument from thinking to immaterial and from thence to indiscerpible, and from thence to immortal don't seem to obtain in your way of thinking.

If *esse* be only *percipere*, upon what is our consciousness founded ? I perccived yesterday, and I perceive now, but last night between my yesterday's and today's perception there has been an intermission when I perceived nothing. It seems to me there must be some principle common to these perceptions, whose *esse* don't depend upon them, but in which they are, as it were, connected, and on which they depend, whereby I am and continue conscious of them.

Lastly, Mr. Locke's argument (B. 2. Ch. 19. Sec. 4.) from the intention and remission of thought, appears to me very considerable ; according to which, upon this supposition, the soul must exist more or have a greater degree of being at one time than at another, according as it thinks more intensely or more remissly.

I own I said very wrong when I said I did not know what to make of ideas more than of matter. My meaning was, in effect, the same as I expressed afterwards about the substance of the soul's being a somewhat as unknown as matter. And what I intended by those questions was whether our ideas are not the substance of the soul itself, under so many various modifications, according to that saying (if I understand it right) *Intellectus intelligendo fit omnia?*¹ It is true, those expressions (modifications, impressions, etc.) are metaphorical, and it seems to me to be no less so, to say that ideas exist in the mind, and I am under some doubt whether this last way of speaking don't carry us further from the thing, than to say ideas are the mind variously modified ; but as you observe, it is scarce possible to speak of the mind without a metaphor.

Thus Sir, your goodness has tempted me to presume again to trouble you once more ; and I submit the whole to your correction ; but I can't conclude without saying that I am so much persuaded that your books teach truth, indeed the most excellent truths, and that in the most excellent manner, that I can't but express myself again very solicitously desirous that the noble design you have begun may be yet further pursued in the second part. And everybody that has seen the first is earnestly with me in this request. In hopes of which I will not desire you to waste your time in writing to me (tho' otherwise I should esteem it the greatest favor), at least till I have endeavoured further to gain

¹ [Aristotle, *De Anima*, III, 5, 430a9 : ἔστιν δὲ μὲν τοιοῦτος νοῦς τῷ πάντα γίνεσθαι—Ed.]

satisfaction by another perusal of the books I have, with the other pieces you are so kind as to offer, which I will thankfully accept, for I had not *The Principles* of my own, it was a borrowed one I used.

The bearer hereof, Capt. Gorham, is a coaster bound now to Boston, which trade he constantly uses (except that it has been now long interrupted by the winter). But he always touches at Newport, and will wait on the Rev'd Mr. Honyman both going and returning, by whom you will have opportunity to send those books.

I am, Rev'd Sir,
with the greatest gratitude,
your most devoted humble servant,
S. Johnson

Stratford, Feb. 5, 1729/30 [i.e. 1730]

IV BERKELEY TO JOHNSON

Reverend Sir,

Yours of Feb. 5th came not to my hands before yesterday ; and this afternoon, being informed that a sloop is ready to sail towards your town, I would not let slip the opportunity of returning you an answer, though wrote in a hurry.

1 I have no objection against calling the ideas in the mind of God archetypes of ours. But I object against those archetypes by philosophers supposed to be real things, and to have an absolute rational existence distinct from their being perceived by any mind whatsoever ; it being the opinion of all materialists that an ideal existence in the Divine Mind is one thing, and the real existence of material things another.

2 As to Space. I have no notion of any but that which is relative. I know some late philosophers have attributed extension to God, particularly mathematicians, one of whom, in a treatise, *De Spatio Reali*,¹ pretends to find out fifteen of the incommunicable attributes of God in Space. But it seems to me that, they being all negative, he might as well have found them in Nothing ; and that it would have been as justly inferred from Space being impassive, uncreated, indivisible, etc., that it was Nothing as that it was God.

Sir Isaac Newton supposeth an absolute Space, different from relative, and consequent thereto ; absolute Motion different from relative motion ; and with all other mathematicians he supposeth the infinite divisibility of the finite parts of this absolute space ; he also supposeth material bodies to drift therein. Now, though I do acknowledge Sir Isaac to have been an extraordinary man, and most profound mathematician, yet I cannot agree with him in these particulars. I make no scruple to use the word Space, as well as all other words in common use ; but I do not thereby mean a distinct absolute being. For my meaning I refer you to what I have published.

¹ [Joseph Raphson, a Fellow of the Royal Society, published his *Analysis Aequationum Universalium, cui annexum est, De Spatio Reali seu Ente Infinito* in 1697. Berkeley refers to this work also in his early essay *Of Infinites*, in entries 298 and 827 of the *Philos. Commentaries*, and probably in *Princ.* 117, on which see note *in loco*.—Ed.]

By the *τὸν νῦν* I suppose to be implied that all things, past and to come, are actually present to the mind of God, and that there is in Him no change, variation, or succession. A succession of ideas I take to *constitute* Time, and not to be only the sensible measure thereof, as Mr. Locke and others think. But in these matters every man is to think for himself, and speak as he finds. One of my earliest inquiries was about Time, which led me into several paradoxes that I did not think fit or necessary to publish; particularly the notion that the Resurrection follows the next moment to death. We are confounded and perplexed about time. (1) Supposing a succession in God. (2) Conceiving that we have an *abstract idea* of Time. (3) Supposing that the Time in one mind is to be measured by the succession of ideas in another. (4) Not considering the true use and end of words, which as often terminate in the will as in the understanding, being employed rather to excite, influence, and direct action, than to produce clear and distinct ideas.

3 That the soul of man is passive as well as active, I make no doubt. Abstract general ideas was a notion that Mr. Locke held in common with the Schoolmen, and I think all other philosophers; it runs through his whole book of Human Understanding. He holds an abstract idea of existence; exclusive of perceiving and being perceived. I cannot find I have any such idea, and this is my reason against it. Descartes proceeds upon other principles. One square foot of snow is as white as a thousand yards; one single perception is as truly a perception as one hundred. Now, any degree of perception being sufficient to Existence, it will not follow that we should say one *existed more* at one time than another, any more than we should say a thousand yards of snow are whiter than one yard. But, after all, this comes to a verbal dispute. I think it might prevent a good deal of obscurity and dispute to examine well what I have said about abstraction, and about the true sense and significance of words, in several parts of these things that I have published, though much remains to be said on that subject.

You say you agree with me that there is nothing within [*sic*; ? without] your mind but God and other spirits, with the attributes or properties belonging to them, and the ideas contained in them.

This is a principle or main point, from which, and from what I had laid down about abstract ideas, much may be deduced. But if in every inference we should not agree, so long as the main points are settled and well understood, I should be less solicitous

about particular conjectures. I could wish that all the things I have published on these philosophical subjects were read in the order wherein I published them ; once, to take in the design and connexion of them, and a second time with a critical eye, adding your own thought and observation upon every part as you went along.

I send you herewith the bound books and one unbound. You will take yourself what you have not already. You will give the *Principles*, the *Theory*, and the *Dialogues*, one of each, with my service, to the gentleman who is Fellow of Newhaven College, whose compliments you brought to me. What remains you will give as you please.

If at any time your affairs should draw you into these parts, you shall be very welcome to pass as many days as you can spend at my house. Four or five days' conversation would set several things in a fuller and clearer light than writing could do in as many months. In the meantime, I shall be glad to hear from you or your friends, whenever you please to favour,

Reverend Sir,

Your very humble servant,

George Berkeley.

Pray let me know whether they would admit the writings of Hooker and Chillingworth into the library of the College in Newhaven.¹

Rhode Island, March 24, 1730.

¹ [Later Yale University. Berkeley is not sure that such Anglican theologians would be acceptable to a college for Puritans. He must have received a reassuring reply, for in 1733 he sent from England eight cases of books for the college, which included Hooker and Chillingworth. The gift was 'the finest collection of books that ever came together at one time into America. The number was near 1,000 volumes (including those which he had sent before) whereof 260 were folios, and generally very large. I judge that this collection cost at least 400 pounds sterling. This donation of books was made, partly out of the Doctor's own estate, but principally out of monies which he procured from some generous gentlemen in England' (T. Clap, *The Annals or History of Yale College*, 1766). The books are listed in *Yale University Library Gazette*, vol. 8 (1933), pp. 9-26.—Ed.]

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE PRESS OF THE PUBLISHERS